

Adolescence, Sense of Identity and Risk Taking

Amongst Female Students

in a Senior Secondary School in Tasmania

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M.Ed. (Tasmania)

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Declaration of Originality

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ABSTRACT

This research examined risk taking, with the main focus being negative risk taking and the main target adolescent females in a Senior Secondary School setting in Tasmania, using three varied methodologies and perspectives for the data collection. The first, and major method, used a questionnaire distributed to a Year 11 group of females, aged sixteen to nineteen, who were just beginning their first year of non –compulsory, post secondary education. This questionnaire covered many socio-demographic factors in the females' lives and had the main focus of discovering their risk taking perceptions and participation rates regarding four main areas of negative risk taking, namely alcohol and drug use and abuse, sexual activity and the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos. The socio-demographic information concentrated on the females' sense of self, their personal goals and positive and negative risk taking activities within the context of social capital, psychological, social, educational, risk taking and health background theory and in the three domains of family, school and community. Comparisons were drawn between the town and country female participants.

To provide a wider perspective on the topic of risk taking, interviews were also conducted with those professionals and carers of adolescent children, namely School Administrators, Teachers, and Parents to provide information from the reality of adolescents' lives. These adults gave important insights into the actual issues, common to this age group. They provided information regarding the nature of their discussions about risk- taking and the strategies they utilized to produce resilience in adolescents and the avoidance of negative risk-taking activities.

The third source of data involved a review of the Australian and State Policies impinging on aspects of the curricula suitable for these adolescents. These policies demonstrated two approaches to the topics under discussion in this thesis. The Australian Government policies gave broad, generic guidelines to the problems associated with negative risk taking and provided funding, whilst the individual States provided the actual curricula and personnel. Funding was a key component for the successful implementation of the State programs.

The major findings from the questionnaire emphasised that the females' sense of self, parental influence and, to a lesser extent, religious values will decrease negative risk taking. The advice from the adults in the interviews focused on maintaining a positive attitude about adolescent risk taking activities, with the use of personal experiences to provide guidelines for appropriate behaviour. The analysis of the policies emphasised the need to provide healthy, supportive environments for adolescents and appropriate information about negative risk taking.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The focus for this thesis, titled Adolescence, Sense of Identity and Risk Taking Amongst Senior Secondary Female Students in a Senior Secondary College in Tasmania, evolved during a search for a study which would provide background knowledge for educators, teachers and counsellors working with adolescents. The researcher was involved, in her professional life, with the teaching of adolescents, so her attention turned to this age group and the rapid changes in the world, in general, and in society in particular. It was then that questions began to form as to the implications of these factors upon this group of young adolescents, especially young women, as the twenty first century began to unfold.

White and Wyn (2004) suggested that young people have a more difficult set of choices about their lives in this present century. "Research on young people is identifying and opening up 'silences' and gaps in everyday life around youth, sexuality, and difference" (p. 23). These choices were exacerbated by the fact that the previous generation of parents was not aware that they had the responsibility to leave a template about how to live, for this present age group to follow. Gilding (2001) suggested that there had been "a dramatic change in the meaning and experience of family...especially over the last thirty years" (as cited in White & Wyn, 2004, p. 104). It became apparent, then, that as a part of the changes in this present century, the roles of women and young girls would change and would need to be seen in different perspectives. With the constraints of the former century disappearing, females in the twenty first century will face multiple tensions arising from changed social conditions and values, one of which will be the need to face and to deal with risk taking in greater proportions. Subsequently, the focus for this research project became one from which the researcher would be able to study, analyse and hopefully

to understand adolescence in general, females in particular and risk taking, particularly negative risk taking and the reasons and thinking behind this behaviour. The background for such a study would need to be drawn from a select group of disciplinary views, focusing primarily on adolescence and risk taking, but also including a broader background framework of knowledge from the associated disciplines of psychology, sociology, education, counselling and health.

1.1 Contextual Background

A Senior Secondary College environment where the students were predominantly between the ages of sixteen and nineteen was identified as being the most appropriate location for finding participants for a questionnaire for this research. The Senior Secondary College chosen for this study is situated on the island of Tasmania. This island is in an isolated position in the Southern Hemisphere, located 240 kilometres south east of the mainland of Australia and 2000 kilometres from Antarctica. It is the smallest of the six states of Australia - 67,800 sq. km. - and the Southern Ocean, Tasman Sea and Bass Strait encircle it. Over one third of the State's forests are reserved in World Heritage Areas or in National Forests. The history of the state's English penal-colony settlement dates back to the early 1800s, but the Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors first reached the island 40,000 years ago.

Today, there are 500,000 people living in Tasmania, with nearly half of that figure living in the capital city of Hobart (pop. 203,600) (2008) in the south of the island. Launceston, in the north, is the second city (population 98,500) (2008) whilst the remainder of the island has many small towns with 25,000, or less, in population, in each of fifteen defined regions. Rural activities predominate in all regions with a diversity of temperate climates, regional products from crops, sheep and cattle rearing, fruit growing, vineyards, timber milling and salmon farming. Industrial activities include minerals, mining and smelting, wood chipping, woollen products, vegetable processing, papermaking, breweries, cement and cement products. Tasmania, as part of the Commonwealth of Australia, has its own democratic government with two

Houses of Parliament and is also represented within the two sections or Houses of the Australian Government, situated in Canberra (Tourism Tasmania, 2007, pp. 1-17).

Tasmania was a suitable state for this study, having a wide variety of Senior Secondary Colleges, both public and private, with suitable groups of young females in the adolescent years between sixteen and nineteen. One area was chosen because there was a good mix of large and small towns and outlying country and isolated districts, from which the targeted age groups could be approached to participate in a survey.

The actual college chosen had a very suitable intake of over two hundred females, aged between sixteen and nineteen. Additionally, they came from both the towns and outlying country areas, from which the researcher could obtain comparative information about female risk taking perceptions and activities. The adolescents are changing with today's society and new insights are needed to manage their needs and life styles in the twenty- first century. The world is open to them with all the modern technologies and opportunities to travel and to experience life in other cultures where their values and attitudes will be changed or modified.

1.2 Research Background

This thesis developed and maintained its inspiration from the writings of many researchers during the research process (Abbott-Chapman & Denholm, 2001; Plant & Plant, 1992; Vialle, Lysaght and Verenikina, 2005; White & Wyn, 2004). In 2001 Abbott-Chapman and Denholm wrote "It is now more important than ever to discover what young people themselves think about risk and risky behaviour, the pluses and minuses, and why public information programmes so far have achieved so little in behaviour modification" (Abbott-Chapman & Denholm, 2001, p. 280). Vialle, Lysaght & Verenikina (2005) also highlighted the need to study this group because "Adolescence is a time where...depression, risk behaviours and violence and self harm rise dramatically" (Vialle et al., 2005. p. 206).

1.3 Aims of the Questionnaire Research

The main aim for this research was to study, in the first instance, the negative risk taking of adolescent females in the age group sixteen to nineteen, focusing on a specified set of negative risk taking activities. This would be contained within a study of the socio-demographic factors impinging on the female participants in the three domains of family, school and community. There was a need for a defined approach to the risk taking so that from the wide variety and large number of risk taking activities (both positive and negative) a manageable group of risky activities needed to emerge for use within this study. Consequently, the group of negative risk taking activities focused on four major categories, which included alcohol use, drug use, sexual activity and one aspect of the media with the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos.

The four main categories were subsequently subdivided into fourteen negative risk-taking activities to form the basis of the research. Statistics on all the female adolescent health problems alerted the researcher to include a further aim to this study, this being the longer-term health implications of the designated risk taking activities for young women. Data from a triennial survey of Australian secondary students which examined trends in adolescent alcohol use from 1984-1999 stated that “Nearly all adolescents in Australia have had some experience of alcohol by the time they are 18” (White, Hill & Effendi, 2003, p. 3). As the study reached its final stages, Abbott-Chapman (2007) revealed results from a study of 954 students in Senior Secondary Schools and Colleges in Tasmania. The findings indicated, “that high levels of consumption of alcohol and binge drinking...distinguishes the behaviour of teenage girls from their mothers’ generation” (Abbott-Chapman, Denholm & Wyld, 2007, p. 1). Research of this nature would contribute to the body of knowledge about the age group taught by the researcher and provide essential information for a wide spectrum of professionals working with young adolescent people.

1.4 The Research Question and Objectives

The overarching question at the core of thesis was defined as “What is the level of negative risk taking amongst female students in a Senior Secondary School environment?” This question was then allied to key Research Objectives to provide a wide locus for the investigation of the lives of senior secondary female students.

Key Research Objectives were then identified from the Literature Review with Research Objectives 1-5 used as a basis for the analysis of the Qualitative and Quantitative Data in Chapters 4 and 5. Research Objective 6 was used in Chapter 6 to analyse the Interviews with administrators, teachers and parents, along with Five Themes. Research Objective 7 was specifically used to analyse the Policy Documents in Chapter 7.

1.4.1 The Research Objectives are:

- RO1. To investigate the concept of “self” in adolescent females, the adolescent females’ aspirations for the future and their risk taking attitudes.
- RO2. To determine the amount of personal control, evident in the adolescent females’ lives in their younger years and their attitudes regarding the law, legal restrictions and adult authority.
- RO3. To discover the amount of expectations placed on the adolescent females, by themselves, their families, their schools and their communities in their earlier years.
- RO4. To ascertain whether adolescent females are resilient to adversity in their lives.
- RO5. To analyse the need to “sensation seek” in the lives of adolescent girls and their perceptions of their risk taking activities.
- RO6. To examine the views of Adults with responsibility for teaching or caring for adolescents (For Chapter 6).

- RO7. (a) To examine the policies of Education Authorities in relation to the Risk Taking of Adolescents.
- (b) To examine the practicality of the policies in regard to economic, resource base, curricula and time considerations.
- (c) To consider the implications for teachers.
- (d) To consider their coherence, noting similarities and differences (For Chapter 7).

The following themes were derived from the data provided from the Interview Survey and were used in conjunction with Research Objective 6.

1. Advice to students
2. Expectations for Students
3. Health Concerns for Parents
4. Strategies to Assist Students
5. Resilience Measures for Students

1.4.2 Rationale of the Research Objectives (ROs)

The literature review provided a wide variety of topics and information about adolescent females. From this, the researcher was able to reflect on the key aspects of adolescent lives and the independent factors, which could be linked together, to form a pathway to a possible “reality” view of the modern adolescent female. This pathway would reveal the adolescent females’ understanding of self and identity, attitudes, aspirations and future plans. Following these aspects, the pathway would proceed to the control systems that restrained their lives, and placed expectations upon them, yet supported them through life’s traumas, complementing their resilience levels. The final stage of the pathway would investigate how these considerations were reflected in their desire to seek sensational experiences and excitement through negative risk taking activities.

RO1. The concept of “self” in adolescent females, their aspirations for the future and their risk taking attitudes

This purpose of this objective was to ascertain whether the findings emphasised the need for young women to have a “self expectation” or “knowledge of self”, so that they could set their own goals and have a sense of their own destiny. Would their personal descriptions, and peer group influences, prove to be complementary forces in their lives? Additionally, would family structure, educational ambitions, teacher influences, and their desires for careers and achievement, form the catalysts for positive attitudes to their lives as young college females, thereby limiting the range and extent of their negative risk taking activities? From a social capital viewpoint, would the participation by these young women in sporting, cultural and community activities increase their sense of self worth and motivate them to lead less negative risk taking lives?

Contrary to the perceived view in literature, that women have a lower expectation of success than males (Itons-Peterson, 2006; Pixley, 2005). This objective would be crucial in determining whether young women in the twenty first century have already developed a high degree of self-actualisation in all spheres of their lives. It would be interesting to discover whether these young women found their college educational opportunities exciting and whether success and positive educational attitudes were paramount in their minds, or whether they were influenced by their peer groups to follow less individual pathways and to be more involved in negative risky behaviour.

Senior College students are at the last stage of their general education and because of the age range of sixteen to nineteen have reached what could be considered a more responsible and more cautious time in their lives. This question was included therefore to judge whether any motivation or aspirations held by this female college age group were impeded by their risky lifestyles. This part of the objective would assist in determining the participants’ motivation levels and whether the adolescents were solely concerned with their desires for stimulating lifestyles, including many risky activities, or whether these were a minor part of their lives and did not

impinge on their potential to aspire to and to achieve their personal, educational and career goals.

RO2 The amount of personal control evident in the adolescent girls' lives in their younger years and the attitudes prevalent amongst adolescent girls regarding the law, legal restrictions and adult authority.

Adolescents, in their college years, are in the last stages of childhood where they are still subjected to authority in many situations within their lives, before being considered adults with their own rights. This objective aimed to reveal the authoritative checks and balances within their lives in the three domains of the family, the school setting and the local community. These three domains were included in the study questionnaire, to gauge whether the controlling mechanisms of the family, school and community assist in convincing young women to take a personal stance to negate harmful risk taking activities. The effect of control and relationships with parents generally, and with each parent separately, in the female's lives, and their corresponding reactions, would disclose evidence to support or negate family influences. As the college years are designed to prepare students for careers, employment and general educational backgrounds, the effect of school rules and discipline would also provide useful data for this study. The final sphere of control and influence on the females would be obtained from the social control of other family members and the influence of government institutions, such as schools and other welfare agencies within the females' local communities.

All the negative risk taking activities included in this study have the potential to be illegal, depending on the age group of the females e.g. the age of consent for alcohol consumption in Tasmania is eighteen and many of the students were under this age. Additionally, sexual activity has the legal age of seventeen for women. Therefore, the attitudes, which adolescents have in general, and young women in particular, towards the laws in this country and to the prevailing legal systems would be explored within this objective. The possibility that adolescents trade off risks against their benefits is relevant to

their negation of the consequences of the legal systems. Further analyses would attempt to dissect the reasons for refusing to obey the relevant legal requirements. The control of the police force and the deterrent of the judicial system, as well as the changes in authority and power of other adults, especially parents over adolescents' lives, would complement the other factors in this objective.

RO3. The expectations placed on adolescent girls by themselves, the family, their schools and the community in their earlier lives.

The expectations concerning education, career, marriage and child bearing, placed upon the young women by the family, school and community in their formative years were considered important for this study and led to the inclusion of this objective. The concept of whether families are havens for nurturing children's growth, attitudes and development given the constant restructuring of families in the latter part of the past century and continuing into this present century would be the focus with this question. These changes reflected social, economic and historical trends, such as the loss of the extended family and family separation and breakdown, all with the potential to impact on the young females' development and attitudes to risk taking in particular and motivation in general.

The social capital resources of local communities provided an additional catalyst for this question to gauge the amount of expectation and influence the adolescent females would adopt from the educational pressures placed upon them during their school and community experiences, these being contrasted with those achievements of their mothers. Career expectations would also be included in this section to judge the females' usage of these family and educational expectations and resources to begin the processes of achieving suitable life pathways.

RO4 The resilience of adolescent girls to adversity in their lives.

Again adolescence can be seen as a time of great stress and turbulence and, as with any group of individuals, they can be subjected to adversity within their lives. Coupled with any engagement in negative risk taking activities, life for adolescents could be seen as traumatic, demanding many coping strategies

and support mechanisms. Females are stereotypically noted for being dependent and emotional, so would resilience prove to be a characteristic less common to this group? Would these adolescent females be capable of managing the traumas in their lives by themselves or would they seek the assistance of their family members, relatives and peer groups? As a consequence, this consideration was included to compare the traumas in the females' lives with their resilience capabilities.

RO5 The evidence of the need to “sensation seek” in the lives of adolescent girls and to discover the females’ perceptions of risk taking activities.

As the period of time between childhood and adulthood is known as adolescence, this query was included to ascertain whether adolescence is so stress and conflict ridden that the adolescent way of coping is to live dangerously and to take risks of a negative kind. This objective was therefore designed to seek evidence about whether adolescents would have the inbuilt tendency to “sensation-seeking” and the need for novel, varying and complex situations. It was included to discover whether adolescents, particularly females, wish to live in an egocentric way, distorting their knowledge of reality, the law and the legal system, and do so by releasing their tensions with their participation in risky activities. Hopefully, by analysing the reasons behind the “sensation seeking”, the females would reveal the levels of curiosity and loss of inhibitions, which create these excitement filled activities, and their concepts of what constitutes right and wrong behaviour. They could also reveal the parameters, which curbed their participation levels, in dangerous risk taking behaviours.

At this point, it was necessary to gauge from this objective whether these adolescent women had been given sufficient background knowledge about risk taking in general and whether they were cognisant of the inherent dangers of their negative risk taking activities. Information regarding death, injury, harm to others and legal consequences was the main aim of this section. Discrepancies in the levels of their knowledge about the actual dangers they had undertaken and the health implications of these activities could provide

the lobbying for further parental action and curriculum design to cover these omissions. The females' attitudes to smoking and drinking in general would complete the picture of information held by the participants.

RO6 To examine the views of Adults with responsibility for teaching or caring for adolescents (For Chapter 6).

As the initial research was reviewed, specific knowledge from adults working or caring for adolescents was identified. There was a realization that these were the people who were in close contact with adolescents each day and were instrumental in guiding, teaching and caring for them. It was evident these adults would be able to provide further insight into the problems surrounding adolescents, suitable advice to be given to them and strategies to assist in alleviating traumas from involvement with risk taking activities. When speaking to parents and professional educators, it became clear that there was an excellent opportunity to enter into the "real" world of those with adolescents as a part of their lives, one which would complement not only the theoretical background of this study, but also the findings from the female participants in the questionnaire. The adults would have first-hand experience in dealing with all the issues involved with adolescence, especially negative risk taking.

RO7 (a) To examine the policies of Education Authorities in relation to the Risk Taking of Adolescents.

(b) To examine the practicality of the policies in regard to economic, resource base, curricula and time considerations.

(c) To consider the implications for teachers.

(d) To consider their coherence, noting similarities and differences (For Chapter 7).

This objective was included to gauge the level of policy support, existing in Australia as a whole nation and in the States as well, about the four issues of negative risk taking in this study. The aim was to discover whether they were general or specific in nature, whether they were packaged with appropriate curricula and funding to finance their introduction into schools and colleges

and whether they were short term, or had provisions for longer-term involvement with school curricula and general health programmes within the educational facilities. There was also the interest in the ramifications for teachers with any policy and curricula additions to the already crowded curriculum. There have been many new curricula changes in many of Australia's schools in recent years and therefore, teachers would be the first group of people to bear the burden of any additional curricula innovations or additional programmes, even if accompanied with national funding.

1.5 Interviews - Administrators, Teachers and Parents

The second component of this study included interviews with Administrators, Teachers and Parents, conducted to gauge the opinions about adolescent issues, including risk taking, from those adults who were living and/or working with teenagers. The responses were to be analysed using a set of five themes identified from the survey of these adults working or living with adolescents. These questions focused on the main topics discussed with the adults who were closely involved with adolescents.

1.5.1 Interview Questions

1. What type of discussions should Administrators/Teachers/Parents be having with students about their gender, attitudes, behaviours and life choices?
2. Given that drugs are a part of life today, what strategies should school Administrators/Teacher/Parents use to inform their students?
3. How can school Administrators/Teachers/Parents inform their students about risk taking, both positive and negative?
4. What type of expectations can school Administrators/Teachers/Parents have about the female students' futures?
5. What stereotypes and views exist for females in today's society?
6. What type of educational programmes should school Administrators/Parents/Teachers undertake to inform their students about negative Risk-taking activities?

7. Consider that you have to counsel a sixteen-year old student. What advice, as a School Administrator/Teacher/Parent, would you give about the following risks:

Alcohol Use

Drink Driving

Speeding

Drug Taking

Sexual Activity

Viewing Pornography

1.6 Review of Policy Documents

The third component of the research included an analysis of the Australian and State policy makers and their Policy Documents regarding the four aspects of negative risk taking in this study, namely alcohol and drug use and abuse, sexual activity and the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos. The revelations from these documents were analysed in Chapter 7 using the Five Objectives as outlined earlier, also used in Chapter 4.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research was deemed to be a valuable basis for future studies of Tasmanian adolescents. An extensive Internet search disclosed only one other study completed in Tasmania about a range of adolescent risk taking activities. This was the Abbott-Chapman and Denholm (2001) study on twenty-six risk taking activities with Tasmanian adolescent students. Other studies, completed in Tasmania, focused, to the greatest extent, on adolescent health issues, such as Vitamin A deficiency, with a lesser amount on education and curriculum issues. Those, which compared with the research in this thesis, were on children and risk (Lynch & Easthope, 1989), health attitudes and risk taking (Denholm, 1995), safe sex (Hillier, Harrison & Warr, 1998) risk taking and postmodernity (Stranger, 2001), marijuana use (Tas.Gov.Youth Affairs, 1992) substance and well being (Jessup, 2005), substance abuse (Dept. of Rural Health, 2006), retreats and time out (Abbott-Chapman, 2006). Branwhite (2000) contended that everyone should learn

about adolescents and that there is twenty-five more times the research on child development than on adolescence (Branwhite, 2000, p. 7). Jaffe (1998) had commented earlier that such research would expand the knowledge base for educators, parents, therapists, teachers, counsellors, social and justice workers and any co-workers with adolescents (Jaffe, 1998, p. 4).

This study would reveal the origins of adolescence and the characteristics of adolescents and their relationships with their peers, their parents, their teachers and community members. It would also highlight the differences between female and male adolescence and the respective risk-taking activities and causes for both groups.

A comprehensive review of risk would provide a greater understanding about its positive and negative aspects. The health information would serve as a caution for adolescents, whilst the strategies suggested for the prevention of negative risk taking would provide a basis for parents and professionals to engage in collegial endeavours with adolescents to stem the tide of risky behaviour.

Whilst Tasmania can be seen as an isolated island in the southern hemisphere, it has a very modern lifestyle with many pre-graduate educational facilities and one university in three major locations around the state. As part of Australia, it is experiencing an economic boom at this time (2008) and because of this factor, there are many opportunities for young adolescents to enter the work force and to have successful careers, occupations and lives within this state.

All groups of Tasmanian society, especially the adolescents have access to, and are influenced by the trends, safe and risky, of the wider world. Maintaining a healthy, informed and educated population of adolescents is essential for Tasmania's future growth and prosperity. This study would, therefore, be very beneficial to a wide group of professionals, not only teachers, but youth counsellors, justice personnel and medical workers. These adults, working with youth in any field, will find the information from this study a valuable resource.

1.8 Scope of the Study

1.8.1 Literature Research Background

Adolescence

The literature review concentrated initially on the background to Adolescence and was based on research from a wide variety of sources, not solely Tasmanian or Australian. A question, raised by Jaffe (1998) asked, “Does adolescence exist as a unique stage?” (p.3). The answer came from earlier evidence as quoted by Jaffe, from Palladino (1996), that this adolescent stage of human development and its associated process actually existed, but was made difficult to define because “Adolescents differ in so many ways [and] each stage leads to the other” (as cited in Jaffe, 1998, p. 3). Definitions from Bessant (1998) and explanations from Lesko (2001) assisted with the understanding of the origins of the terminology, “adolescence” and the age group of “adolescents” to which it applies. Once credibility and definitions were established, details of the general characteristics surrounding adolescence and adolescents led to the need for caution about making generalizations about this process or stage of life. The differences between young male and young female adolescents further defined the background material.

Risk

With this background established, the next focus within the literature review was concerned with the nature of risk taking, both positive and negative and their relationship to the personality traits of individuals. Definitions of risk, historically, are plentiful with Hall (1908) writing the first major treatise about adolescence. Hall, quoted by Bosma and Jackson (1990) considered adolescence as a time of “storm and stress”, yet a starting point for adulthood (as cited in Bosma & Jackson 1990, p. 30). Explanations, about adolescence, followed from relevant research (Bloustein, 2003; Shiroma, 1994) with the differences outlined between male and female risk taking (Heaven, 2001; Lesko, 2001; Rice & Dolgin, 2002). A discussion of the reasons behind the increased risk taking of females, from a range of health issues, still concerned

researcher Steinberg (2007) because “Heightened risk taking during adolescence is likely to be biologically driven and possibly inevitable” (p. 1). In this section of the study, the findings of Bukatko and Daehler (2004) and Bloustein (2003) revealed the social and cultural changes impacting on women as opposed to those affecting men.

Peer Group

At this stage the review of literature disclosed an abundance of researchers interested in the peer group influence on adolescents. These studies outlined the possible effects of the peer group in preventing or encouraging risk taking at all levels, and with both males and females (Bloustein, 2003; Bosma & Jackson, 1990; Eisenberg & Aalsma, 2005). A focus on the negative aspects of risk taking and the inherent health dangers for each type of negative risk taking surveyed in this study became the aim at this stage of the review (Plant & Plant, 1992; Yates, 1992).

Prevention Strategies

To counter the negativity of this latter section, researchers provided insight into risk prevention measures and possible approaches and strategies to counter the engagement of youth in potentially dangerous risk taking activities, whilst other authors provided the insight needed to understand these measures (Bennett, 2007; Burrows & Wright, 2003).

Psychology Background

All this background material to adolescence and risk taking was followed by more specific research regarding the relationship of the disciplines of psychology, sociology, education, counselling and health to the key questions posed in the survey of the young females. The psychology background explored the key issues inherent in the development of females. It reviewed the main tendencies of female behaviour and the pathways they pursue as influenced by their psychology (Bukatko & Daehler, 2004; Dryfoos, 2006; Heaven, Ciarrochi & Viale, 2007). An assessment of the attitudes of parents and school professionals along with their contribution to female self-fulfilment provided further insight. Various researchers (Knox, Funk, Elliott

& Bush, 2000; Farmer, 1995) provided information on the differences between male and female adolescents to gauge any differences in the treatment and psychological development of the two groups.

Sociology Background

The sociology background was concerned in the first instance with the social, economic and political contexts (Earle & Fopp, 1999) in which young people grow up and live. Details concerning the powerful and influential adult groups dominating adolescent students' lives, including the effect of the media, provided secondary, alternative sociological viewpoints about the attitudes, expectations and views held by sociologists about young adolescents.

The dynamics of the family were included as examples of the parental and sibling influences on the young. Emotional distancing from parents, either real or fanciful, was also discussed within this family dimension (Bosma & Jackson, 1990). A wider societal view investigated the effect of the peer group, particularly on girls. These disclosures were countered by the sociologists' examination of these adult viewpoints and demands on the young men and women and the place of these young people in the wider society (Black & McCartney, 1997).

Education Professional Roles

The role of adults working as educators of young adolescents was scrutinised in the section on education professionals (Branwhite, 2000). The skills and personality traits most suitable for teachers reflected the situation of increased students' legal rights within this century and the student-centred approach in curricula design. An analysis of counselling practices by researchers (Bockeloo & Griffin, 2007; Geldard & Patton, 2007) outlined the practices deemed most suitable for use by both teachers and other youth professionals.

All of this section, dealing with specific professionals and their contribution to the development of adolescence, led to the wider implications of the social contexts in which adolescents operate and engage with their communities.

Social Capital

At this point, an analysis was conducted about the positive effects of social capital on our lives in relation to adolescents in society. Researchers, such as Putman (2000) and Coleman (1990), provided insight into this aspect of our lives. Time was spent on defining social capital and its overall contribution to our wellbeing. Discussion followed regarding the social networks, which supply us with social capital, particularly those affecting young women. Therefore, the social capital discussion focused on the economic and political contexts in which these young people grow up and live and included the stereotyping effects of society. As a contrast, an analysis of the control mechanisms imposed by the social systems in which young women operate, gave more insight in gauging their contribution to the development of individuals (Bloustein, 2003). Researchers (Berne & Huberman, 1999; Heaven, Mak, Barry & Ciarrochi, 2001) were interested in the family and its social capital successes and failures. From this point, the literature review changed from a generalised background to the more specific “situations” involved with this study.

Background to Situations

All the literature research expounded to this point formed the backdrop against which this Tasmanian research could unfold. The first of four “situations”, in which this project was set, analysed the risks actually surveyed. These consisted of three aspects of alcohol usage, (drinking, drink driving and binge drinking), then sexual activity, including the non-use of available contraception and sex with strangers, followed by drug use and abuse and finally the effects of X-Rated (pornographic) videos.

The second “situation” identified the health risks undertaken by these young women with their risky behaviour in the areas outlined above. The third “situation”, essentially the main consideration of this study, attempted to answer the question, “What it is like to be a female in Tasmania at this stage of the twenty first century?” “What are the challenges she will face?” and “What risks will there be in her adolescent years?”

Situation 1

The first “situation” involved research into alcohol use which disclosed some alarming statistics about the young age at which young people begin to experiment with this risky behaviour (Australian Foundation for Alcohol and Drug Education, 2003; Smart, Toumbourou & Hutchinson, 2007). The discussion focused upon the reasons as to why drinking alcohol actually begins and the roles adults and the peer group play in encouraging this behaviour. A surprising revelation, indicated by researchers (Salvation Army, 2002; Coleman, 2002), confirmed that an early intervention at a very young ages was necessary, to begin the education against alcohol use. This also necessitated the critical appraisal of the media coverage of alcohol, linked with developing self-esteem in young children.

Definitions about binge drinking and reasons for this risky behaviour probed deeply to find the sources of this problem. Once again, the role of the peer group became a focus of the study into alcohol use. Analysis followed about the immediate risks of binge drinking as related to the overall health prognoses, along with counselling advice (Bonomo, 2005; Swan, 2007). A major contributing cause to Australia’s injury toll is the result of drink driving [alongside suicide], most particularly by young adult males (Tressider, 2006). The research reported on studies and statistics from enquiries into this phenomenon and recorded the lower involvement of females. Image presentation and negative attitudes to authority were discussed as possible factors in discussing drink driving along with other risky behaviour factors. Prevention programmes, including group-based actions, concluded this alcohol related section.

Situation 2

The second “situation” and next risk category, involved the sexual activity of young, female adolescents. Australian teenagers are noted for the increasing trend to disregard the consequences of sexual activity (Child Trends Data Base, 2003; Futris & McDowell, 2002; Lo & Bernard, 2006), such as pregnancy and STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) and are noted for their frequent use of emergency contraception. Therefore, sexual activity research

is very concerned with the health issues involved as a result of the associated risky behaviours. The difficulties in reporting accurately about such topics as teen pregnancy and STIs were disclosed along with discussions as to the causes of sexual risky behaviour (Copeland, 2002; Sabic, 2007). Strategies for interventions into this trend towards high-risk sexual behaviour drew on overseas experiences as well as Australian initiatives. The clinical services available in Australia and future plans to secure healthier sexual outcomes and less risk taking for our teenage population, of interest in a wide variety of research inquiry, (Child Trends Data Base, 2003; Doran, Gasgoine & Shakeshaft, 2006), completed this overview.

Situation 3

Following sexual activity, the “third” situation, the use and abuse of illicit drugs began with factual information statistics regarding the type of drugs involved and the propensity of our youth to engage in risky activities with them (Arterburn & Burns, 2007; Emmett & Nice, 2008; Rice & Dolgin, 2002). Whilst marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug, information was provided about the use of the other drugs in this study - heroin, cocaine and inhalants. Although women are noted for being less likely to engage in this risky drug behaviour, causes of participation and attitudes needed to be addressed. The traumas of lives, lived with disabilities and lives lost to premature mortality, were also appraised, as were prevention and rehabilitation strategies.

Situation 4

The final risk situation involved the role of the media and the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos and will, at times, also be included in the sexual activity category or “second” situation. The studies of media effects disclosed the ramifications they have for young women with increased pregnancy rates and HIV sexual activity (Crabbe & Corlett, 2008; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006). The effect of subordinate and demeaning portrayals of women in television (Wingard & Di Clemente, 2005) provided significance being a reason for later risk taking by adolescent females (McKee, 2005). Discussion in relation to

violence, abuse and multiple sex partners and media content also formed an important contribution to this risk consideration.

There is significant evidence in the literature that excesses with alcohol, drugs and sexual activity could lead to health related problems in later life (Carr-Gregg, Enderby & Glover, 2003). Drugs and chemicals are particularly related to kidney disease whilst women are also more susceptible to other diseases caused by alcohol - diseases of the liver, heart and brain. Other serious conditions occur following sexual activity, so the research background included information about venereal diseases, Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS and their place in female health issues.

Twenty First Century Females

What then, does it mean to be a female in this century? The theory discussed the supposed submissiveness of girls and lack of cultural capital and financial independence (Driscoll, 2002; Tuscano, 2006), but also elaborated upon female proclivity to being agents of their own destinies (Griffiths, 1995). The ways in which girls and boys are socialized and the importance, engagement and reaction to friendships, both female and male, added to the diverse picture which can be painted about females.

Researchers (Buckmir, 2002; Morton & Tankersley, 2007) are cognisant of the need to enter the world of adolescence to understand their passage to adulthood. Research from girls' diaries indicated high levels of anticipation for romance and sexual interest and provided ambiguous messages about young women and dilemmas for females, with being feminine, yet proper, and not sexually active in society.

The role of adult women in modelling suitable, social behaviour confirmed its place in the subduing of young females, whilst family considerations assessed their abilities to absorb the process of adolescence. The relation of factors such as stress and depression needed to be linked to their risk taking propensities, perceptions and participation according to Bloustein (2003). All the above factors need to be taken into account in this study.

1.8.2 Methodology

A combination of three research methods collected the data for this study of adolescent risk taking. These methods consisted of collecting qualitative and quantitative data from a postal questionnaire, with additional perspectives being obtained through a set of interview questions for administrators, teachers and parents about risk taking. An analysis of Australian and State policies, on negative risk taking activities, completed the data collection.

The selection method for the participants for the questionnaire and the administrator/teacher/parent interview set of questions is included, together with details regarding the collation of the Australian and National Policy Documents about the risk taking activities to be discussed in this study, namely alcohol and drug use and abuse, sexual activity including the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos.

Information about the formulation and distribution of the questionnaire and the methods used for the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data received are then outlined. The questionnaire contained opportunities for the female participants to rate their perception of risk against specific activities, as well as providing ratings as to the frequency with which they had engaged in the risky behaviour, whilst the interviews gave key adults the opportunities to view adolescent risk taking from different points of view. The Policy Documents, by contrast, had both holistic and specific rules and guidelines regarding the whole picture of adolescent wellbeing and living in supportive environments.

From the participants' answers in the questionnaire, a wide range of categories for analysis was compiled and coding undertaken of all the text using a computer software programme, named NVivo. To support this initial coding process, a statistical dimension was also added by using SPSS - a Statistical Programme for Social Sciences - to code the data. Both of these approaches facilitated, not only the analyses of the qualitative responses of the participants, but also permitted the combination and comparison of many factors, simultaneously, to produce qualitative and quantitative responses to answer the Research Objectives. From the two coding processes, clarification

was gained about the sociological factors, which contribute to negative kind risk-taking activities, as were the factors which alleviated some of the risks. The policies and set of interview questions were also analysed using the set of five Research Objectives as the basis, with one additional Research Objective (RO7), pertinent to the documents and their ramifications for students and teachers.

1.8.3 Inductive and Deductive Processes

The researcher used many processes to analyse the qualitative data from the questionnaire, the set of questions for the administrator/teachers/ parents and the Australian and State risk taking policies. The relevant issues involved with both adolescence itself, and the positive and negative aspects of risk taking and their health implications emerged from the literature review.

To all this the researcher brought her inductive thinking from findings from her teaching career, namely the sense of identity and the effect of participation in the community with a wide variety of interests. Inductive qualitative researchers, such as Glasser and Strauss (1967), had explained that there existed a complicated relationship between the methods used “to collect data and the analysis of those data” (as cited in Scott & Usher, 1996, p. 57).

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) added further information by explaining that there was a “dialectical relationship...between theory building and data collection” to the extent that the researchers’ initial hunches, hypotheses and conjectures are gradually refined and reformulated”, assisting researchers in the analytical focus and the reorganisation of the data (as cited in Scott & Usher, 1996, p. 57). By contrast, deductive reasoning suggested that it is possible to move, as by the scientific method, “from general kinds of statements to particular statements...objective and independent of experience” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 22). Popper (1959) argued, “the main criterion as to whether a statement has any scientific status resides in its testability” (as cited in Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 22). Consequently, the researcher reflected on the initial findings from the reading of the questionnaire responses and began an induction process, followed by a deduction process using the SPSS software programme. The first five Research Objectives

became the focus for the collation of all the revelations disclosed by the research from the questionnaire and the collation of the policy documents, with an additional research Objective 6 for Chapter 6. This objective disclosed the findings from the interviews, while a set of questions in Research Objective 7, assisted the discussion of the national and state policies on risk taking issues. All this was combined with the extensive experience of forty-three years the researcher had had in teaching, mainly with adolescent age groups.

1.8.4 Coding with NVivo and SPSS

Part of the NVivo qualitative data coding used the three methods, named “open coding”, “axial coding” and “selective coding”. From the nine hundred pages of questionnaire transcripts, groups of concepts emerged and these were collected into thirty-five categories with the Index Tree Root Nodes’ total of two hundred and twelve Nodes and three hundred and seventy eight Free Nodes. The interviews resulted in twelve pages of survey information and there were twenty- three policy and associated documents.

A second coding session of the information of the questionnaire was undertaken to comply with the requirements of the SPSS statistical, analytical programme. Each coded category of information from the NVivo coding (e.g. Siblings) was recoded using a numerical value only. These numerical values corresponded to the former NVivo qualitative descriptions. Thus Siblings became: 1 = Sisters 2 = No Sisters 3 = Brothers 4 = No Brothers 5 = Both Sisters and Brothers 6 = No Siblings. The first coding produced too many variables, resulting in small totals in some categories and therefore a second coding was conducted reducing the numbers of variables. An example of this occurred with the category of Future Goals Personal where seventeen options were reduced to two, 1=Travel, Relocation/Sport, 2= Personal Aspirations.

These findings were used to provide verification of the key questions selected for this study. These questions focused on the key elements, namely the importance of self, the control, expectations and influence of others in the family, school and community, the participants’ resilience in times of trauma

and their “sensation seeking” with actual, negative risk taking, considering the effects of peer and other pressures.

1.8.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The senior secondary college, chosen as the setting for this survey, had a very suitable enrolment of over two hundred female students in the age group needed for this study. Because many of these students travelled from outlying districts to attend this college, a postal questionnaire was used to gain the required information. Personal interviews would not have been advisable, as the students would not have had the privacy and confidentiality necessary for the completion of many of the personal responses concerning their negative risk taking participation. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) advised that surveys in the researcher’s worksite were not wise because the expectations and attitudes of the co-workers could “make it difficult and untenable” and that “students tell us what is most appropriate or suitable for a teacher”, but no problems were encountered in the survey’s distribution (p. 16).

There were opportunities in the questionnaire to include questions regarding both qualitative and quantitative data, an approach whereby personal, psychological and private emotional responses to the questions could be juxtaposed with the quantitative data in the risk taking and participation ratings’ sections of this study. Qualitative responses provided opportunities to discover the catalysts for female negative risk taking which could indicate possible strategies for their prevention in the future. The quantitative data would provide the comparison of key factors with the risk taking ratings.

A letter indicating the arrival of the questionnaire was sent one week prior to its distribution by post, to allow for questions, explanations or refusals to participate. From the participants’ answers, a wide range of categories for analysis was compiled and coded for later recall and interpretation using a computer software programme named NVivo. To support this initial qualitative coding, a statistical approach was added by introducing SPSS - a Statistical Programme for Social Sciences - to code the quantitative data. Both of these approaches facilitated not only the analyses of the personal responses of the respondents, but also permitted the combination and comparison of

many factors simultaneously, to produce statistical responses. From these analyses, the sociological factors which contributed to risk taking activities and those which contributed to alleviating them, were identified. The questionnaire also contained opportunities for the comparison of the generic ratings of risk taking with the respondents' frequencies of engagement with the activities. The findings were then applied to the literature background to provide answers to the questions and the objectives. The Qualitative and Quantitative findings from the questionnaire analysis are contained in Chapters 4 and 5, the information from the interviews in Chapter 6 and the policy analysis in Chapter 7.

1.8.6 Design of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to provide a generic background of characteristics common to the designated age group, with a particular emphasis on females. Therefore the focus was about the females' personal details, their location, parental background, early expectations, future goals, risk taking perceptions and participation. To provide more cohesion, the risk taking activities were grouped into four categories based on the attention given to them in the development of the questionnaire used as the basis of the research in this study. Therefore the analysis concentrated on their risk participation in alcohol use, sexual activity, drug use and dependence and the influence of certain aspects of the media. These specific groups of risk taking behaviour were analysed at first from the point of view of the adolescent concept of self and identity. Then family, school and community socialization influences became the focus. This was followed by the effect of trauma and adolescent resilience and the impact that "sensation seeking" has on adolescents to instigate adverse risk taking and subsequent health problems.

The first set of questions focused on obtaining general background and personal information regarding the females' ages, their residential location and family details such as the number of parents or guardians as well as siblings. To establish a socio-economic profile of the students, provisions were also made to record the educational levels of their parents. The accent

then turned directly to the young women's interests and attitudes to religious beliefs.

Questions in the second set were about the females' childhood experiences, the influences and expectations of parents, school acceptance, enjoyment or rejection, the influence of peers and significant other family and community members. These were followed by questions revealing the goals they had held in childhood about their future education, career and family aspirations.

The third section focused on the participants' sense of self, their predictions for the future, their relationships with their parents, the levels of parental and community control over them and their resilience levels when faced with trauma in their lives. The last section concentrated on the females' perception of, and participation in, negative risk taking activities. The questions then focussed on the females' attitudes to their risk taking and the morality or legality of all the activities in the survey, as well as their attitudes to the treatment of adolescents in today's society. Two Likert Scale questions, where the females rated their perception and participation in risky activities, concluded the survey. The first Likert Scale requested the student to rate the level of risk in each activity (1-8), whilst the second requested the level of participation (1-4).

1.8.7 Questionnaire Delivery

This questionnaire was partially developed from information gained in the researcher's literature review and from the researcher's findings in a former thesis on women and leadership. However, of more importance was the input from the researcher's close consultation with experts in this field of adolescence. These included teachers of similar age groups in similar colleges throughout Tasmania and other professionals working with adolescents. Lecturers from the researcher's host University (University of Tasmania) raised pertinent queries and suggestions, which led the researcher back into further avenues of research, about adolescence and risk taking. Attendance at Conferences gave the researcher the opportunity to speak to experts in this field and to review the questionnaire content on a regular basis.

Following all this input, it was deemed unnecessary to run a trial of the questionnaire. Instead, in the introductory letter, each potential respondent was given an opportunity to refuse to participate in the survey or to ask relevant questions about its contents. Only one student refused and one parent needed further information regarding the purpose of this project. Therefore the original questionnaire was posted to the designated audience without further alterations or additions. (A copy of this questionnaire appears in the thesis as Appendix 3).

1.8.8 Sample for Questionnaire

A list of all Grade 11 female students was provided by the selected Senior Secondary College and approval for the study was given by the school's Principal, the Tasmanian Education Department and the University of Tasmania's Ethics' Committee. The College records identified two hundred female students enrolled in Grade 11. Only one student refused and one mother raised queries about the project with one of the College's Vice Principals. Subsequently, two hundred and nineteen questionnaires were posted to the female students in Grade 11, together with a reply paid envelope addressed to the researcher's home address, so that the survey could be a discrete activity outside the environment of the college. It was then seen as being directly involved with the researcher who was a member of the College's staff, but not as a College activity. Each questionnaire was anonymous with no identification of the respondent indicated on the document. As each one was received back, the researcher allocated a numerical identification to it and only referred to each questionnaire using its numerical indicator. There was no need for a sample group from another college in the same area, as the results were to be compared with the literature findings and other studies. The administrators/ teachers/parents were chosen from the researchers' network of colleagues in the education field.

1.8.9 Interviews

The set of questions for the administrators/teachers/parents began with general queries about gender and life choices' discussions with adolescents in Question 1. The next two questions (Questions 3 and 4) approached the subject

of one risk (drugs) and positive and negative risks. Expectations for females and stereotypes were examined in the next two questions (Questions 5 and 6). Education programmes to prevent and inform students about risk and examples of risky activities were included in the final Question 7 to examine the type of counselling deemed necessary for adolescents.

Once the administrators/teachers/parents had been approached and had consented to answer the interview set of questions, these were sent by E-Mail and the answers returned in the same fashion. One administrator also chose to discuss the answers, in the first instance, via a telephone conversation.

1.8.10 Policy Documents

The policy documents were obtained from Australian and State sources and covered the four topics in this study, namely alcohol and drug use and abuse, sexual activity and the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos. They were analysed using the first Five Objectives from the Objectives' list and with Research Objective 7, which was especially concerned with the documents, sought more information regarding the types of policies and the impact they may have had on the educators in each state.

1.9 Ethical Issues

The personal nature of the information in the questionnaire survey presented the major ethical issue. The students could have been concerned about revealing their risk taking activities in the privacy of their own home, but without the direct availability of counselling. There could have been fears from the females concerning being recognized from their questionnaires, with possible subsequent disclosures or unsolicited referrals to counsellors. The target group may have wanted more notice that it had been chosen for the study and may have wanted more background about the study and the rationale for it.

The researcher, being a teacher within the target college, may have been deemed as delving into aspects of her employment which were not applicable for her teaching role. The whole project could have been seen as her acting in an opportunistic way, with a target audience within her work site. Many may

have disapproved of the researcher having the possibility of gaining further qualifications. Other staff members may have been offended that their involvement had not been sought, with the exceptions of the counselling staff which was involved, but only after a request from the University's Ethics' Committee.

Parents may have also had concerns that family and personal details would be disclosed and that there was no redress for them about this matter. Several students were disappointed that they would not know the outcomes of the study and would not have a wider view of risk taking within their own environment and locality. In the letter sent to them before the questionnaire, it was noted that there would be no contact with the researcher about the questionnaire and no opportunity for them to add further explanations verbally or to qualify any of their personal details.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study concerned the fact that the research for the questionnaire, and its subsequent compilation and delivery took several months, so that by the time the survey was conducted the students had nearly finished their year in the college and the examination period was soon to begin. This left only enough time to send a second request to potential respondents and not enough time for the researcher to identify any of the students to conduct interviews regarding the more controversial revelations in the responses. The use of the Likert scale to gauge the risk taking ratings and participation rates may also be considered to be too subjective and other forms of assessment could have been suggested for use. There was also some criticism from university and teaching personnel, regarding the limited categories of risk-taking chosen for the study, but a greater number would have made the study too cumbersome.

It was not possible to hold introductory information sessions for the participants to acquaint them with the nature of the project, as many of them came from outlying areas and distances would have been a mitigating factor. This study could not have operated from the observational perspective and, by the nature of the questions, it had to rely on the subjective answers in a

questionnaire. Interviews on the sensitive issues of risk taking would have been fraught with possible embarrassment on the part of the respondents and with the potential for value judgments to be made by the researcher who could “contaminate” the project (Scott & Usher, 1996, p. 57). Again the qualitative nature of the responses permitted much more descriptive, personal interpretation as opposed to the quantitative research which summarises sets of data much more objectively. A balance between the two approaches in the findings alleviated this limitation and added to its credibility.

The literature background may have been construed as being too much of a reflection of the researcher’s personal focus and interest. When the data were analysed, one further limitation was evident in that the whole project had appealed mostly to the motivated, career orientated group of females in the target group, the proportions being two thirds motivated, to one third undecided about their futures. There was still considerable evidence of risk taking in both groups, but a better balance of motivated/unmotivated respondents would have provided a more comparative picture. If the students had been permitted to meet with the researcher, there could have been small focus group discussions held to clarify the responses in more depth.

With the interviews, limitations occurred because many adults offered, but they were either male or had not had direct experience with adolescent children, either male or female. The policy documents, both national and state, were readily accessible by electronic sources, with some states being more prolific and specific with their documents than others.

1.11 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has outlined the purpose of the study and its value to a wide range of professionals. The literature overview has emphasized the adolescent background as well as other disciplines and theories which guided the analysis of the data obtained in the questionnaire. This was then related to the questionnaire content, the categories of questions asked and the range of risk taking activities under discussion. Details of the methodology have been explained and the ethical considerations have been considered. The limitations

of the research have been noted and discussed in the context of the study's environments.

Chapter 2 includes the full discussion of the related literature beginning with a discussion about the existence of adolescence, definitions and origins of the terminology. The process involved with adolescence is examined and the need to study it is qualified. Qualification for the project is given and the process of adolescence is examined. Adolescent characteristics, especially the differences between male and female adolescence and the development of a sense of identity, provide other dimensions of the topic. Details about peer group influence and pressure complete the general background to adolescence. Characteristics of disciplines, namely psychology, sociology, educational counselling and health, provide alternative avenues for the analysis of the data obtained in this study. The treatment of adolescents is discussed in relation to the family schools, teachers and the legal system and the contribution of social capital. The main categories of risk- alcohol and drug use and abuse and sexual activity - are analysed in detail with comparisons from another Tasmanian study. Females and their changes in the twenty first century complete this literature review.

Chapter 3 details the research question and objectives, followed by the research design and methods. Also included is information regarding the sites for data collection and the participants' characteristics. This is complemented with an instrumentation section containing the ethics' details and an intensive analysis of qualitative and quantitative research and the characteristics of questionnaires, with their positive and negative attributes. The adolescent questionnaire structure is outlined, followed by the procedures for the data collection from each instrument. The originality and limitations of the study sections precede a final summary of the chapter.

Chapters 4 and 5 disclose the qualitative and quantitative analyses provided with the use of the NVivo and SPSS programmes. The key components matching each relevant Research Objective are analysed and conclusions are drawn. Quantitative data are also provided with the addition of numerical results for each category under discussion and associated percentages. The

quantitative data and the analysis with the SPSS programme are introduced with definitions of terminology such as Mean, Crosstabulations, T Tests and ANOVA. The Independent and Dependent Variables are compared to reveal significant findings. This is followed in Chapter 6 by a survey of School Administrators, Teachers and Parents regarding their attitudes to a range of questions concerning the advice and educational programmes which could alleviate negative risk taking amongst adolescents.

Chapter 7 introduces another approach to data collection with a national and state policy review using the Research Objectives about the key risks in the study. Chapter 8 reflects upon the researcher's personal responses and reactions to the study. This is followed by a detailed review of the main Literature contentions, compared to the findings from the research. Each Research Objective and the Interview Questions then perform the vehicles for discussing the research findings. Recommendations are made for the future education of adolescents regarding their life choices and negative risk taking.

CHAPTER 2**LITERATURE REVIEW****2.0 Aims of the Literature Review**

The aims of this literature review are to provide a background of information from prior research and relevant sources about the process of adolescence, and to highlight specifically the types of risk taking being undertaken by adolescents. The risk taking background is general, in the first instance, for both males and females, whilst the main aim is to examine the negative risk taking within alcohol and drug use and abuse and sexual activity, by females in particular. Adolescents form a pivotal group within our society, as they will be the next group to enter our work force and become adults. Why are they so misunderstood? Why does their passage to adulthood become so difficult that risky behaviour is deemed necessary? This literature review attempts to clarify the background necessary for a study of adolescence and negative risk behaviours.

Definitions of the terminology are discussed and age ranges for adolescence begin the literature coverage. Questions as to whether adolescence is a valid stage of human development are answered, with explanations qualifying the need for studies of young people in this age group. These considerations are followed by a general section outlining the characteristics of adolescence and adolescents, emphasising caution about adopting a generic view of these individuals. Male and female adolescent characteristics are compared in order to place the female adolescent in a specific context, within the all-encompassing general view of adolescence. Peer group pressure is then examined in relation to the effect this has on both male and female participants. Risk taking, in both positive and negative terms, is discussed, including definitions and analyses of the increased trends in female negative risk behaviour. Prevention and intervention strategies with negative risky activities are included at this point, together with an overview of the health implications prevalent in each of the risk-taking behaviours in this study.

Background from disciplines associated with youth, such as psychology, sociology, education, the judicial system, counselling and health complement the adolescent background. The treatment of these young people within the family, by teachers and other adults and the legal system is also investigated and links are made to the social capital benefits prevalent in each of the following domains of the home, school and community. The risks, which are the focus of this study, include alcohol and drug use and/or abuse, as well as sexual activity, including pornographic video exposure. These will be explained in detail, with the use of statistics and Australian trends and prevention methods. One Tasmanian study with a similar focus is analysed and the findings are discussed. The female perspective is highlighted in comparison to male characteristics. The final section portrays what it means to be female and more importantly, being a female in this early part of the twenty-first century.

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 Adolescence

Questions could be posed as to whether the unique stage of adolescence actually exists. It is not an easy task to define this stage of a male or female's life. The most obvious definition comes from the biological one where the "biological and physical changes which occur at this time literally transform children into adults" (Cobb, 1992, p.170). Alternatively Moshman (2004) refers to adolescence as a time where "cognition levels" appear, rarely seen in humans earlier than near age eleven (p.1). Additionally, Palladino (1996) suggested that there is overwhelming evidence that teenagers do exist and continues with the explanation that adolescence is a concept, which arose in the nineteenth century, when the Factory Acts of the 1850s curbed the use of child labour in factories and mines (as cited in Jaffe, 1998, p.3). Lesko adds further explanation in that, along with industrialization, the child labour laws and the end of apprenticeships, the young were prevented from moving from dependence to independence in the workforce (and thus new terminology originated) (Lesko, 2001, p. 7).

This study will disclose the ways in which the concept of adolescence is viewed as a part of the Australian culture. It will also explore the premise that all adolescents experience a difficult stage in their lives and will consider whether they are in conflict with adults, causing problems at school and in society.

Additionally, researchers could ask whether adolescents are different people or are they just an amalgamation of childhood characteristics and those of adulthood? It is a fact that our culture has no rites of passage to demarcate the change in status from child to adult, but it has instead a long transitional period that we call adolescence - from one point of view - aged ten to twenty five - that is noted by accelerating physical changes, accompanying puberty (and) results in sexual maturity (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 2).

As Baurind (1987) contended, "Adolescence is a psychosocial stage in the life span and is therefore specific to class and culture" (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 2). From the "socio-cultural perspective, adolescence is best understood as the state appropriation of youth leisure...and the imposition of compulsory education legislation" (Kroger, 1996, p. 4). Bethlehem (1969) adds additional insight, explaining that the "increase of youth going to college created the problem of adolescence, because it meant the postponement of earning a living and the postponement of adult sexuality until well past the age when sexual activity is reached" (as cited in Kroger, 1996, p. 4). Adolescents can find themselves in a labyrinth of difficult and confusing choices, as "Just when the path seems clear, they run into another wall" (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 20).

This study will disclose how the Australian culture views this process of adolescence and whether it allows the time and consideration for the process to occur. Adolescents have many opportunities in Australia to complete their education to high levels. The levels of participation by the female participants in this survey will disclose their aspirations and attitudes to education as well as their experiences of adolescence.

2.1.2. Risk

Simply defined risk is “the possibility of loss” (Yates, 1992, p. 4). Yates and Stone provide a further, very general definition of risk taking as “any action having at least one uncertain outcome” (Yates, 1992, p. 136).

2.1.3 Drugs

Drug abuse in this research is defined as the use of any drug for other than a medicinal purpose or in improper quantities or administration.

2.2 Adolescence Background

The term “adolescence” derives its meaning from the French (and formerly from the Latin) verb translation “AD (olescere)” which means, “to grow into adulthood” (Bessant, Sercombe & Watts 1998, p. 20). Growing up, into the state of adulthood takes time. Adolescence is therefore considered to be a process and not a situation arrived at in a moment of time. The past research of Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966) approached adolescence with an outcomes perspective whilst the current approach is to view adolescence as a process. Grotevant (1992) was one of the first to consider this process approach and during this time called adolescence, he emphasized the gathering of information about oneself and about the environment in order to make life choices. There is a self-concept and a feedback interaction with adolescents and others. If there is a discrepancy between the two, one’s behaviour and self-concept must be modified to achieve consistency (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 188).

In discussions with adolescents and from feedback in the study’s survey, the researcher has found that there is more an emphasis for them to consider their adolescence as a time of process and an outcome as they mature. This research then, aims to fill the gaps in our knowledge about the time frames needed for adolescents to gain control over their lives.

Another view is that “adolescence was understood as a chunk in time that could be displayed and manipulated in various contexts”, this being “a ‘panoptical’ time [which] emphasises the endings toward which youth are to

progress”. It places individual adolescents into a (time) narrative that demands a moratorium of responsibility and acting “as if each moment of the present is consequential” (Lesko, 2001, p.107). Indeed, Lesko also indicates that adolescence has been a way in which adolescents can watch and correct themselves (p. 107).

Looking at adolescence historically, a variety of definitions highlight the adolescent phase of life. Historically, Hall, as early as 1904, commented about the adolescents’ “storm and stress in emotional development” to which Lewin (1948) added that an adolescent is seen as a “marginal person”. Cole (1961) wrote about the “catalogues of problems” existing in adolescence and Zinnecker (1981), identified the “generation gap” between the adult world and the “adolescent sub-culture”. Other definitions include adolescence being a “social world, highly stressful” and a period of “transitions” (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 35). Adolescence can also simply be a time of “transition”, but one also filled with “turmoil and confusion” (Heaven, 2001, Preface). The research therefore, needs to determine whether adolescents actually see their adolescence in such negative terms as addressed in these definitions.

As adolescence is in progress, a search for a sense of identity begins. This may be described in terms of a total concept of self. It is personal because it is a sense of “I-ness”, but it is also social with a sense of “we-ness”. Adolescents who have positive identities have a sense of accepting themselves (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 187). There are three important factors to be considered with the process and changes present in the adolescent years. The first factor concerns the nature of the changes, (such as growth spurts and reproduction stages). The second brings to the fore the necessity to define coping in relationship with the development of the individual, (as in one’s height, weight and sexuality issues) while the last aspect also questions the role of self-conception and its place as a variable in this process (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 1).

The natural view of adolescence, which is the base for psychology and medicine, grounds its view in biology and determines the adolescent destiny,

in that the adolescent body, with its hormone-induced growth spurts, creates psychological, emotional and interpersonal problems for young people. A socio-historical view emphasises, especially, the way in which the economic and educational opportunities at this time, construct young people in distinctive ways (Lesko, 2001, p. 7).

An important component for adolescents is that adults know and accept adolescents exactly as they are, faults and all. Adolescents, according to Bomar and Sabatelli (1996) need to know they are valued, accepted and liked by their parents who should also have tolerance for individuality, intimacy and interpersonal differences in the family (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, pp. 236-7). Gender roles in society have undergone and are still undergoing some drastic changes. These are becoming more flexible and are not so strictly defined as being concerned with femininity or masculinity, so consequently men and women are interchanging roles and women now have changed roles regarding their choices of vocation, career and personal achievements (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 18).

It will be interesting to find out in this study whether the female participants only viewed their lives as being concerned with the “self”, motivation and achievement, or in traditional feminine terms, with purely marriage and family as the main goals.

Lesko (2001) adds a new dimension to the concept of adolescence. This author believes that the approach in the past has been to treat this stage of life with a boyologists’ approach. This was a tendency to see youth in the best light with rose-coloured glasses, whereby they were moving towards progress or improvement of the human condition. Although this was directed mainly at white boys, it had the added effect of creating a devotion to adolescent development and education. With cuts in welfare (in America), again Lesko (2001) felt that in the research the “romance” is now over and many youth are living in poverty (p.7).

There are many young people living in poverty in Australia, some by their own design, others through family breakdown and conflict. The women’s movement in Australia has increased the opportunities for women, but at a

cost - the cost of bearing children for some women who cannot afford to leave a prominent position for the childbearing years. It will be interesting to note whether this research will reveal how these Tasmanian females view their future work, family and prosperity levels.

2.3 Adolescent Characteristics

Now that the process of adolescence is deemed to be a credible one, other opinions about this stage can be revealed. It is seen as one of the most difficult periods in one's life, as it is a time full of insecurities and one where adolescents are searching for acceptance, striving for adulthood and are releasing all their tensions and stresses caused by the multiplicity of choices these changes make in their lives. Shiroma (1994) contends that the problems of this stage create the desire for adolescents to take risks in one's life in search of an identity and to find some form of sanity in the world today (Intro.). Arnett's research (1989) also utilises the idea that adolescents are struggling with the concept of "I" and the question "Who am I?" (as cited in Shiroma, 1994, p. 2). Shiroma also continues this line of thinking by stating that adolescents have no ideas about who they are and what they are about at this stage in their lives (p. 4).

Whilst the first concerns of adolescents are about their immediate day-to-day lives, this changes and "rises to ponder the nature of existence" and spiritual questions surface such as "How do I fit into the overall pattern of the universe?" (Vialle, Lysaght & Verenikina, 2005, p. 219). This is a much more positive way to raise this debate about adolescence to a higher dimension, so this research may be useful in providing a fuller picture of the concerns inherent in being an adolescent.

Albright (1994) agreed with the former comments by the researcher, by suggesting that adolescence can be seen in profitable terms as a time of coping and a period of productive adaptation to all the changes, occurring at the time in a young person's life (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 50). Adolescence, from Olbrich (1984) does not always imply crisis and turbulence. Other comments suggest that adolescents are able to cope and

developmental progression can result (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 1). Bloustein (2003) disagrees and reports that adolescence is well documented as a “masculine” construct, the dominant image being “a restless youth”, one who is immature, a trouble-maker, a searcher for identity and one who is attempting to test his physical powers and emotional awareness (p. 210).

When considering the processes involved in adolescence, researchers find that Oertner (1982) felt that it was a “phase of heightened self awareness” whilst Erikson (1996) and Havinghurst (1972) contended that the primary development task confronting adolescents, during this period, was to be preoccupied with the restructuring of their identity. A drop in self-esteem and self-perception may be seen as an indication that this restructuring process has begun. According to media portrayals of adolescents, they are alienated, obnoxious, spoiled or lazy, whereas many adolescents feel misunderstood, blamed and mistreated by adults (as cited in Jaffe, 1998, p. 4). There is an element again, of negativity towards adolescents coming from the latter opinions, but these qualities were difficult to find in this study of adolescent females.

Adolescence, therefore, is a time where a self-concept has to manifest itself, this self-concept needing to recognize many facets including “all self-related cognitions or all attitudes concerning the adolescent himself” (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 49). Self-concept is “a multifaceted concept, including ability in physical [shape] and appearance, peer relationships, reading ability and mathematics ability” (Vialle, Lysaght & Verenikina, 2000, p. 200). As a major and important part of this process, a “vital element of the development changes of adolescence is the acquisition of new social and cognitive skills” (Flavell, Fry, Botkin, Wright & Jarvis, 1968; Miller and Flavell, 1990) (Vialle et al., 2000, p. 200).

Some of these skills include achieving a masculine or feminine social role, accepting one’s physique and how to use one’s body effectively, gaining emotional independence from parents and other significant adults, and obtaining an economic assurance. Combined with these tasks, other skills emerge, such as selecting and preparing for an occupation and marriage and

family life, developing intellectual concepts, achieving responsible behaviour, with a set of appropriate values and an ethical system to guide their actions (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 2). Another view is that studies of adolescence “share a common premise” and that is “the creation of a sense of self...requiring the active and ongoing participation of others” (Oyserman, 1992, p.203). “The adolescent begins to perceive aspects of his own psychological self from the point of view of others” (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 49). Other authors (Bessant et al., 1998; Broughton, 1981; Selman, 1980) also refer to this topic. Elkind (1967) stated that this development is linked frequently with a period of extreme sensitivity and self-relatedness (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 49).

There is the need then, for this research to fully disclose adolescents’ ability to achieve or not achieve their goals and to generally negate the stress from peer relationships. Do they put the emphasis on their physical appearance and never discuss particular skills such as reading or mathematics? The research will complement our knowledge about the busy lives lived by young adolescents today, with formal education and part-time work. Adults need to know whether these activities detract from the time they have to gain new social skills from a broad range of situations.

Literature on this subject of adolescence rarely discusses the contexts in which this adolescent behaviour occurs. Marshall (1986) writes that we can assume that the conditions young people experience and the quality of their interactions with their social world, especially their parents, are indeed highly stressful and that adolescence can be seen as a period of increased emotional demands which often leads to crises and conflicting patterns of behaviour. A startling set of findings from a survey of 2200 adolescents noted that they only spent five times alone with teachers, five times with adults, fifteen times with grandparents or aunts and nineteen times with other adults, all in all, only 1.9 percent of their time. Time with parents was the most significant, with time alone with fathers being minimal. Mothers seemed to be “more receptive to sharing experiences” (as cited in Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 73). Only “5 percent of time was spent with parents and 7.9 percent with parents and siblings together” (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 73).

A perspective emerges where the emphasis is placed on the adolescents' more or less successful attempts to adapt to the demanding situations and to develop further in this transition from childhood to adulthood. The interaction with parents in this study in Chapter 6 may inform researchers about whether a collegial, non-confronting approach with adolescents is necessary to diminish this conflict-ridden interaction.

Adolescent behaviour and its orientation to authority can be viewed in light of the research into personality and how it correlates to authority. Independent studies all tended to agree that negative orientation to authority is related to particular constellations of personality traits, such as impulsiveness, religiosity, extraversion, achievement motivation, venturesomeness, psychoticism, risk taking and an external locus of control. Several of these have also been associated with delinquency, whilst the acceptance of authority is related to high levels of religiosity (Heaven, 2001, p. 200).

Rigby and Densley (1985) found that Australian Catholic adolescents who accepted authority were more likely to have a belief in God and to attend church regularly. Those who perceived themselves to be internally controlled were more supportive of Australian society's institutional authorities (as cited in Heaven, 1994, p. 20). Attitudes to authority and behavioural dispositions are closely linked, with personality being a significant factor, but with an overall contribution being rather small, while peer influences could be high (Heaven, 2001, p. 201). Bloustein's study (2003) of Adelaide girls revealed that, although their stories reflected the centres of their worlds, along with their close friends, families and acquaintances, there were also particularly significant authority figures, such as youth social services officers and officials from the juvenile justice system and the law courts. This author was able to see how the young women viewed their worlds within wider social networks (p. 9). This reflects the trend to view all social relationships in terms of social capital and the level of support and contribution made through these wider relationships.

With the trend today for young adolescents to work as well as study, researchers need to discover more about the acquisition of this "social capital"

From the findings in this thesis, more information will be forthcoming from the female perspective of “social capital”.

2.4 Adolescence and Gender Differences

Gender stereotypes, according to Fiske and Stevens 1993, carry well-defined prescriptions for typical male and female behavior. Furthermore, gender is associated with immensely entrenched power and status in terms of social, political and economic outcomes. Men can be regarded as the more advantaged group, because of these differentials (as cited in Cameron & Lalonde, 2001, p. 59). In the light of these revelations, it is not surprising that females and males tend to react differently to this period of transition. Several theorists, such as Gilligan (1982) and Baker-Miller (1986), suggested that females have a distinct orientation to relationships, such as the seeking out and maintaining them (as cited in Bukatko & Daehler, 2004, p. 492). Surrey (1991) maintained that because of this, females may not wish to break away from the bonding with parents as is the supposition for all adolescents, but instead they may wish to change the form of the relationships. A child's experiences with parents, peers and in school, together with their knowledge of gender-role stereotypes, all impact on the socialization process, especially the fact that boys are treated very differently to girls (as cited in Bukatko & Daehler, 2004, p. 493). Boys are also more likely to receive positive feedback from their parents than girls (Diamant & McAnulty, 1995, p. 429).

In today's society, in Australia and other western countries, family structures are always changing, so that they are not always considered havens for nurturing the child's growth (Bukatko & Daehler, 2004, p. 498). Hudson (1984) contended that the discourses of both adolescence and femininity as articulated by professionals such as teachers, social workers, doctors, and other adults in authority, become available to girls, in their public form, as sets of stereotypical images of adolescence and femininity through the media, such as teenage magazines. As a result, females receive a barrage of generalized views from adults about their appearance and behaviour, resulting in incongruent sets of expectations being placed upon them. Females can feel that “whatever they do will be wrong” (Bloustein, 2003, p. 211). In contrast,

children who have had non-traditional parents show less knowledge of gender stereotypes and, particularly for girls, because of this parental background; they show more “independence and achievement” (Bukatko & Daehler, 2004, p. 498).

This section indicated the need to discover, from this study, the amount of influence the media has in developing false perceptions of what is particularly feminine which can extend to the desirable body image with associated health problems, such as bulimia and anorexia.

Girls have the tendency to attribute failure as an indication of their lack of ability in circumstances where the evaluator was either an adult or another female, whereas boys will only do this when an evaluation is being done by a peer (Diamant & McAnulty, 1995, p. 432). Television enforces stereotypical attitudes about gender roles and attitudes and this has more of an impact on small children. Signorielli (1989) elaborated on the topic of female stereotypes, describing them as either traditional or exaggerated, with women being portrayed as dependent, submissive, or emotional characters, cast in roles such as housewives, teachers, secretaries and nurses. Boys are noted as being more likely to higher risk of violent behaviour than girls, but girls may still be affected in other ways that result in some negative outcomes with a propensity to perpetuate and transfer this intergenerational violence in their behaviour (as cited in Diamant & McAnulty, 1995, p. 432).

In a more recent report (2005) of a longitudinal study of antisocial behaviour of Victorian adolescents (Australia), it was found that individuals who went on to engage in persistent antisocial behaviour (including risk taking) were consistently reported as youth who were more aggressive, more disinhibited and more temperamentally reactive from mid-childhood, than other individuals who later engaged in little or no antisocial behaviour (Australian Temperament Report, 2005, p. 4). This same report indicated that differences between the antisocial groups generally emerged at the same time for males and females (Australian Temperament Report, 2005, p. 8). This aggressive behaviour is usually associated with males, but now it appears that there is evidence to suggest that females are adopting the same patterns.

Females in “vocabulary” type assessments rarely talked in negative terms about the range of topics given to them. Adjectives rarely used in referring to friendship were “uncomfortable”, “unwanted”, “serious” or “careful of what I say” or “distant” or “argumentative” when referring to their own reactions or from the “self” perspective. Boys, by contrast, rarely chose “loved” or “sensitive”, when referring to friendship. Girls talked more about their mothers, boys about their fathers. Valley children talked more about school, while town children produced a great number of general references to themselves (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 41).

This study will highlight the levels of language from the female participants when referring to their mothers and fathers. This will add to the understanding of the disparities in this particular aspect of adolescence.

2.5 Adolescence and Sense of Identity

Adolescents believe that they find out ‘who they are’ in the contexts of the social relations they experience through their lives, beginning with interactions with particular adults, especially their parents (Bessant et al., 1998, p. 47). Researchers contend that we all develop in our “unique way a sense of identity” (Vialle et al., 2000, p. 4). However, the ways in which young people are identified by adults and the ways they identify themselves are usually radically different. However, contradictions are a feature of young people’s lives and attempts to provide tidy classifications, do not allow for any inconsistencies e.g. having an Asian friend and yet being involved with anti-racial politics (Bessant et al., 1998, p. 48).

Adolescents have little experience of life in comparison with adults and less power. They are often seen as a different group from adults, but adolescents would be better served to be seen as a separate, peripheral group from the mainstream adult group, ready to transfer to the adult group at a later stage in their lives. This actually fits well with the notion that adolescents are not a different group to adults, but merely on the perimeters, growing into the mainstream. Adulthood assumes that “children can take an increasing responsibility for their actions, [but] this does not guarantee a translation into

moral or prosocial behaviour” (Vialle et al., 2000, p. 138). Therefore, when referring to adolescents, adults need to be mindful of these factors, as well as several identity markers which should be taken into account to determine their characteristics. These include the knowledge of their ages, religion, ethnicity, physicality, sexuality and gender.

Here we have a section bringing up the need to discover what is meant by the notion of moral or prosocial behaviour. The question “Whose morals are to be considered?” is one waiting for answers from this research. The dilemma, for researchers, lies in the participants’ involvement with risky activities which could be associated with immoral behaviours, if adults and/or society generally were to be the judges, so the participants’ revelations regarding their attitudes to risk participation will be very beneficial.

From the perspective of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1978) the self-concept is comprised of both personal and social identity, with social identity being “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of his or her membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (as cited in Cameron and Lalonde, 2001, p. 60). The individual is driven to maintain a positive social identity by engaging in social comparisons that preserve the favourability and distinctiveness of the in-group relative to relevant out-groups. Three components of women’s identity, as specified by Gurin and Townsend (1986), begin with a perceived similarity to other women, the perception of a common fate, (being treated similarly, based on their group membership) and centrality of group membership to the self (cf Converse, 1970). An additional cognitive centrality was judged by “the amount of time in everyday life that was spent on thinking about [being female] or a woman” (as cited in Cameron & Lalonde, 2001, p. 61). Of great importance is school performance which “becomes a significant factor in the development of self concept” (Vialle et al., 2000, p. 158). This school experience, especially at the higher level, fosters self-esteem, important in all aspects of our lives (Vialle et al., 2005, p. 201).

As the findings from this survey are disclosed, researchers will be able to view the nature of participants' school attitudes and desired rewards such as goal attainment. They will also be able to discover whether the participants' "thinking" will be more in line with gaining a future in predominantly female or masculine ways.

2.6 Adolescent Resilience

Lipton (1994) defined resilience as "the human capacity of all individuals to transform and change, no matter what their risks [entail]" (as cited in Bernard, 1997, p. 1). Bernard also quoted Werner & Smith (1992) who describe this concept of resilience as an innate "self righting" mechanism (as cited in Bernard, 1997, p. 1). Resiliency skills, (according to Werner & Smith, 1992), include the ability to form relationships (social competence), to problem solve (metacognition), to develop a sense of identity (identity), to plan to see (a sense of purpose and future), to plan and hope for the future (as cited in Bernard, 1997, p. 1). Of particular interest for this study was "Being Caucasian, being female, having an internal locus of control and taking an academic curriculum in high school [which] independently predicted academic resilience" (Capella & Weinstein, 2001, p.758).

However, Werner & Smith (1992) also contended that people do achieve fifty to seventy percent of resilience to become confident, competent and caring persons (Bernard, 1997, p. 2). Each youth has innate resilience and students can develop successfully despite adversity and the presence of risk factors as expressed by many researchers (Iaani, 1898; Ioby, Langham & McLaughlin, 1994; Meter, 1995; Rutler, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston & Smith, 1979) (Bernard, 1995, p. 2).

These particular comments may concur with the participants' attitudes to their traumas in their lives. With this research, adolescents may complete our understanding of adolescent resilience and demonstrate the confidence to face the lives they choose to live.

Teachers, according to Bernard (1991), have a very significant role to play in developing student resilience, even though this can be unknown to them in

their educational role. They meet the needs of students, giving love and belonging, respect, accomplishment, learning and meaning to their lives (Bernard, 1997, p. 2). They foster caring relationships, set positive and high expectations and encourage students not to see adversity as a permanent part of their lives. Bernard also refers to Seligman (1995) who saw teachers as agents to enforce the philosophy that setbacks were non - pervasive. This author also draws on Rutter et al. (1979), Rutter (1984) and Kohn (1993) who emphasised the opportunities for teachers to allow students to express their opinions, make choices, to problem solve, assist others and the community and to be respected individuals within all the functioning of the school (as cited in Bernard, 1997, p. 2).

In the researcher's former study of Women and Leadership (Wood, 1998) teachers were the most significant others in the women's lives. Teachers' salaries and long holidays give the public and the student body the impression that it is an easy vocation and they do not realize the training and time the teachers spend in preparation and marking.

Whilst many teachers struggle with new technologies and methodologies in schools today, the students do not appear to recognize their sacrifice and efforts as much as in the past. Consequently, this research will be useful to discover whether teachers are the most significant group today for students at this Senior Secondary level.

2.7 Adolescent Friends and Peer Group

Eisenberg, Lundy, Still and Roth (1985) highlighted three important characteristics of the friendship groups which have a great prominence during adolescence. Friendship gives a novel insight into oneself as well as the characteristics of the friends. "Friends" as quoted by Kendal (1987) "can be freely chosen by teenagers, hence we can expect teenagers to gravitate around people who reinforce the self they wish to be". In other words this is a "biased feedback" (as cited in Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 272).

Adolescent friends (unlike childhood perceptions) can be fallible and likeable and they need not hide weaknesses. Friends, according to Sullivan, (1985) act

as types of therapists, analyzing points of confusion which individuals cannot see on their own. If adolescents feel a sense of inadequacy, “friendship helps as friends accept these characteristics and provide advice for the adolescents’ future lives” (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 147).

According to Hogg and Abrams (1988), there is “increasing empirical evidence that identification with particular crowds is central to providing us with a sense of who we are” and furthermore the concepts of “self identity and group belongingness are related” (as cited in Heaven, Ciarrochi, Vialle & Cechavicuete, 2005, p. 313). According to Younnis et al. (1994) “crowds [of reputation-based groups]” provide “shared knowledge” that gives rise to “orderly” and “efficient” social interactions that are “reflective of cultural and behavioural norms, values and attitudes” (as cited in Heaven, Ciarrochi & Viale, 2007, p. 978). This affiliation with “crowds” is not “fixed for life”, but “early peer networks” are influences “difficult to escape” (Heaven et al., 2007, p. 987).

Other researchers, Dawn and Rose (1991) classified adolescent groups into four types, “involved with school and valuing good grades, involved with school and valuing athleticism and popularity, those on the fringes of school activity and engaging in some alcohol use and finally, [the group engaging in] drug use and some destruction of school property” (as cited in Heaven et al., 2007, p. 978).

Self-reflection by adolescents is an essential process, but it can be fraught with risk as individuals become enmeshed in intra-subjectivity and become deluded in the absence of feedback. Adolescents must also consider the process of the public reflection that takes place within relationships, when all the parties negotiate, discuss and talk out their respective views (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 146). Because of these aspects, there is a symmetrical reciprocity within friendship, not always present in the parenting processes.

With younger children, parents tend to provide restricted views of the relationship, which is available at this time, with their offspring. It is more omnipotent and omniscient. A “mystification” is drawn up between children and adults, where parents appear to be more God-like figures than persons

with normal strengths and frailties. This barrier encourages defensiveness in children who hide or fail to develop parts of themselves in fear of parent disapproval. Adolescents continue with friendships, explaining that friends do not have to have like characteristics to themselves, but that they are different individuals. Friends compare features of both assets and deficits, so that they are alternatively the helper or the helped.

The peer group has both positive and negative effects on adolescents. The positive attributes of peer relationships improve their social and emotional identity, their independence, the ability to relate to others, their levels of satisfaction and again the sense of identity (Hartup & Stevens, 1991; Heaven, 2001). Girls respond to the benefits of close peer and friendship relationships and are known for their preparedness to self-disclosure and for being more mutually intimate and understanding (Heaven, 2001, p. 79). Bloustein (2003) argues that this occurs because adolescence was seen as “masculine”, which “concealed the problem of the ongoing subordination of young women in the groups and in the families of boys” (p. 212).

In adolescence there is the added dimension of mixed-sex interactions. Males reject these “cross-gender” (interactions), more so than females do (Vialle, Lysaght & Verenikina, 2000, p. 150). Bloustein also argues that because youth groupings are always seen in terms of subcultures, society assumes that the young people are challenging parental values whilst simultaneously being embedded in them.

Every group of young people, whilst different in dress, hairstyles and music (all outsourced from the wider community and from international sources) is seen as a sub-culture, yet all belong to homes and to a family/adult unit (Bloustein, 2003, p. 212).

Questions can be answered with this research as to what constitutes the female personality and lifestyle in the Australian and Tasmanian society and in what ways can adolescents be accepted by society as intelligent, knowledgeable young people.

2.8 Risk Taking Characteristics

In adolescence young adults struggle to find out “Who am I?” It is a time of insecurity and confusion about themselves and their lives. It is these insecurities which lead them to risky behaviour. Most attitudes to the word “risk” have the underlying assumption that “risk is inherently repugnant” (Yates, 1992, p. 21), but this is not the accepted universal reality. For some individuals the “intermediate target levels of risk...(are) most appealing” (Yates, 1992, p. 21). Higbee (1997) also reminds us “much of the risk taking is healthy and helps teenagers to grow by trying new things, testing themselves and their abilities” (p. 2). For the adolescent, risk taking, then, is not all bad. Although some of this activity can “pose very real dangers” there are the benefits that other (positive risk taking activities) can yield (Higbee, 1997, p. 1). Many people are “engaged in activities [such as] drinking, smoking, illicit behaviour and sexual activity which are neither perceived as being risky, nor do they lead to adverse consequences” (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 6).

Other authors (Kaplan & Gavriek, 1981; Slovic, 1987) have reported that “there is no such thing as an acceptable risk; because of its nature, risk should always be rejected” (as cited in Yates, 1992, p. 3). Risk taking creates problems which activate special kinds of decision-making processes. In risk taking activities, risk is only one factor or significant aspect of the activity. There are other available options or complications and considerations which impinge on the decision making process, before a successful/non successful outcome is achieved. As an equation, the acceptance or negation of a risk can be considered thus:

Worth of Activity = f (Risk and Other considerations) (Yates, 1992, p. 4).

In adolescence risk activities can be accentuated by gaining auxiliary rewards such as prestige given by the current peer group (Yates, 1992, p. 22). Studies also show that the less known about any activity, the greater the risk (Yates, 1992, p. 50). They also reveal that people often make poor choices in risky situations (Yates, 1992, p. 29). Janis and Mann (1977) also identified time

pressure “as an additional source of stress...on decision making” (as cited in Yates, 1992, p. 213). Arnett (1989) contended that during the time of adolescence, young people desire “to live on the edge; they feel invincible to the world” and consequently engage in more risk taking such as drink driving (as cited in Shiroma, 1994, p. 1). Alcohol also plays a huge role in “how adolescents cope with their stressful lives” (Shiroma, 1994, p. 4). Vavrick (1997) argued that young people need to explore and to test their environments and their own limits in order to develop competence. This will help them to develop a balance between themselves and others and assist them to achieve a sense of identity and autonomy (Vavrick, 1997, p. 3).

There are some myths about risk taking which need dispelling. Our culture has changed our perceptions and blurred the lines between “what is considered to be normal, exploratory behaviour and [conduct] which is dangerous” (Higbee, 1997, p. 1). We are also led to believe that the “generation gap” between adolescents and their parents will prevent understanding between the groups and that adolescents are “fearsome creatures who don’t want to be guided” (Higbee, 1997, p. 1).

Porton also refutes the idea that adolescents are in a constant “primary angry struggle with their parents”. Rather Porton see adolescence as a “potentially positive, testing process, whereby healthy risk-taking can promote a teen’s search for identity and can replace dangerous options” (as cited in Higbee, 1997, p. 1). However, researchers warn us that young people who participate in multiple risk-taking increase the chance of damaging their health (Carr-Gregg, Enderby & Grover, 2003, p. 1).

It is natural to think of ‘risk’ as being a negative term, but this word needs to be understood within the context of each action and this does not always equate to a negative response. Many activities in life are ‘risky’ and risk is necessary for humans to achieve and progress. Some students in this study may even view extending their education as being risky, in case of failure, but without certain endeavours, they may never reach the goals that they desire.

This study definitely considers the nature of alcohol and drug use and abuse and sexual activity as potentially negative and very risky. It will fill gaps in our knowledge about these activities in one location in Tasmania.

2.9 Causes of Risk Taking

There are many factors, which cause risk taking, but very recent research (2007) from the field of neuroscience, is shedding new light on the reasons why these reckless risk taking behaviours occur. Research, using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) on children's brains at two year intervals, found that whilst some areas of the human brain are mature by the end of childhood, the prefrontal cortex, responsible for such things as impulse control and strategic planning, such as anticipating the likely consequences of one's actions, continue maturing through the teenage years. Therefore, these highest level areas may not be fully developed or mature until the adolescents reach their twenties (Bennett, 2007, p. 1).

In the past Bennett (2007) explains that we have blamed raging hormones and peer pressure for risk taking, but these revelations explain the need for adolescents to be thrill seekers (especially boys). The implications of these findings coupled with the increased freedom and the lessening of parental control at this stage, combine to explain adolescents' often erratic and infuriating behaviour (p. 1). Perhaps we are giving too much freedom to our young people - more than they can handle?

The female participants in this study may argue that the thrill seekers are not only boys in today's society. Equality of the sexes has brought down the barriers of what is considered male or female behaviour and this study of female adolescents will disclose whether they too, seek the thrills involved with negative risk taking.

Initial drug use, according to Grode (1970) and Davies and Stacey (1972), suggests that curiosity is the main factor in the adoption of drugs (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 8). More recent research indicates that health-risk behaviours could be related to stress and depression (Carr-Gregg, Enderby & Grover, 2003, p. 1). Dryfoos (1987) includes poverty and social disadvantage,

both of which are common in adolescent life. Genetics, biological traits and a family predisposition to cope adversely with stress are also major factors. To these factors, other determinants can be added-considerations such as low school achievement and lack of parental support. Adolescents themselves may also lack resistance to peer influences and can be by nature non-conformist and rebellious. Dryfoos (1997) mentions early inhibition into high-risk behaviour as another factor to be considered (as cited in Bernard, 1997, p. 1). Bernard (1997) agrees that risk taking associated with drug abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, violence and school failure can be caused by living in poverty (Bernard, 1997, p. 1). This author also contends that risk taking is also located in youth itself, the family and their problems and associated cultures. These family factors lead to stereotyping, low expectations, prejudice and discrimination (Bernard, 1997, p. 1).

Hedonism, or the mere pursuit of relaxation and enjoyment, is another factor prevalent in drug usage. This is tied to the human desire for self-medication and the wish to obtain psychological states, such as euphoria to oblivion (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 8). Drugs may be associated with or proscribed by some ideologies, as with the hippy life style of the 1970s, (and also with criminal activities) but Young (1971) emphasized that illicit drug taking was and still is incompatible with those of traditional religions (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 9). A final consideration lies with the price of these drugs and their availability. There is no single theory to explain why humans engage in the use of drugs, but there still remains the fact that human beings need to explore altered states of consciousness, be it hallucinogenic or euphoric as with listening to music or meditation (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 11).

All people need to be aware that the fear of being harmed by any activity needs to be countered by harm minimization strategies. Alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, opiate and the use of allied substances are all part of the human experience. "Humanity [unfortunately] has a liking for chemical methods of mood adaptation" (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 2). Drinking and drug taking are two risk taking activities which are linked with psychological characteristics such as neuroticism, hostility and extraversion. They are also linked with truancy and early departure from education (Jessor & Jessor, 1997). Young

people have more trouble with psychoactive drug use but most drug users are not low in intelligence. Some drug users are from severely disadvantaged backgrounds and lack of information is often a factor. However, there are differing levels of association between psychoactive drug problems and psychological ill health (Kraft, 1970; Silver, 1971). One common factor in drug use is that it is motivated by enjoyment and legitimacy (Plant & Plant, 1992, pp. 18-19). It is also important to note that drug use does occur at all socio-economic levels.

Stressful life experiences can be caused by or result from alcohol and drug misuse (Blumberg, 1981; Osborne, 1975). In teenage years peer pressure from friends overtakes the influence of the family as far as alcohol, cigarette smoking or illicit drug use are concerned. If adolescents adhere to traditional or orthodox world religions, then illicit drug use reduces. However, heavy drinking and illicit drug use are associated with crimes, including violent crimes as suggested by (Brain, 1986; Collins, 1981; Myer, 1982). No psychoactive drug is able to generate criminal behaviours when consumed by individuals who are not otherwise likely to engage in such activities (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 10).

These factors appear to be very convincing and researchers do not always lay the blame of drug abuse with the individual. Instead the discussion connects the problem to another dimension of human activity, that being the need to experience other dimensions and states and being removed from the pressures of the world. This research is important then, as it will disclose whether the female participants choose to indulge in drug use and abuse and the reasons for their decisions.

Many factors influencing risk taking are biological and/or psychological in characteristics and appear to run in families (Goodwin, 1976; Kianman, Tabakoff & Saito, 1989; Kozlowski, 1991; Partenen, Borium & Markkanen, 1966). There are indications of genetic predispositions to use drugs or to become dependent on them. There is also some evidence that certain humans are predisposed to develop dependence on them. Additionally, there is some evidence that certain humans are predisposed to develop such problems as

liver disease, alcohol dependence and certain types of cancer. Biological and psychological traits in some people are particularly attracted to certain stimulants, depressant or hallucinogenic drugs, whilst others like particular drug effects (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 5).

Attempts to identify an “addictive personality” have resulted in contradictory findings. One problem with this research has been the types of control groups used in the studies. These have been “unusual” groups of people including prisoners or clinic patients. To date, few adolescent positive behaviour studies exist, so data is being extrapolated from negative behaviour findings (Hemphill et al., 2004, p. 29). Health problems experienced by youth can also be traced to the adolescent perception of a “personal invulnerability” (Lewis & Mitnick, 1991, p. 3). These authors quote Irwin and Millstein, (1986) who wrote about young people’s “non experience or lack of experience and their subsequent lack of understanding and the immediate or long term consequences of their risk taking activities” (as cited in Lewis & Mitnick, 1991, p. 7). Whilst some risk taking is normal for adolescent development, risky behaviour results in disastrous results too frequently. “Young men are the most dangerous people on Australian roads...with more damage from motor vehicle accidents than any other group” (Vick, 2003, p. 32). These negative risk behaviours can also include a lack of insight and “brain development during adolescence” (Spano, 2003, p. 36). Consequently, adolescence, according to Compas (2004), can be seen as a time when “Threats to health through smoking, substance abuse, and unprotected sex, increase dramatically” (as cited in Lerner & Steinberg, 2004, p. 263).

Some problems such as drinking and drug use have been linked with psychological characteristics such as neuroticism, hospitality or extraversion, but even so, no unique “alcohol dependent” or “drug dependent personality” has been discovered (Fazey, 1997; Plant, 1981) (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 5). Studies have found that risk factors do increase the likelihood of problematic behaviour, whilst Mahoney and Lafferty (2003) indicated that protective factors such as “the family and its relationship to positive school engagement, increased positive behaviour”. Conversely, in cases where “family attitudes” were favourable for risk factors to be influential, such as

with drug use, there was an association with antisocial behaviour (as cited in Hemphill et al., 2004, p. 29).

Enjoyment is the motivating factor for the use of drugs. Most of it fits into recreational use for pleasure and is rewarding on this basis. The use of drugs heavily, for long periods of time is motivated “by a wish for self medication”, to gain psychological states from such feelings as euphoria to oblivion (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 8). Attempts have been made to relate drug use to wider contexts using social and cultural factors. “Institutionalized problem drinkers and other problem drug users do exhibit high rates of other problem characteristics” (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 8). However, the patterns of drug use and misuse do often vary in relation to socio-economic factors, but in spite of this, drug use occurs at all socio-economic levels. Some drug use can be associated with social deprivation as in specific areas in big cities, but Stimson (1981) contends “plenty of affluent people” also use drugs and it is not one particular disadvantaged group (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 8). What is confronting is “the increased likelihood of becoming involved with crime, delinquency and truancy” (Langfield, McIntyre & Turner, 2004, p. 1).

The diminishing influence of religious morals opens the way for adolescents to adopt their own standards and sense of morals. Parents and educators will gain from the revelations of the participants in this study, as to the varying levels of arguments needed to encourage adolescents to adopt more cautious lifestyles. This study may also reveal the sources of moral force for individuals, without religious beliefs.

World religions of the traditional, orthodox type consider drugs to be incompatible with their beliefs according to Young (1971). Adherence to such religions reduces illicit drug use, according to Pitman and Syndes (1962), with references to Islamic cultures, the Bible Belt in USA and Ireland (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 9). Not all drug users come from disturbed or dysfunctional families but there is a strong correlation of family disturbance (separation and broken homes) and parental drug abuse with alcohol and drug use. Jessor & Jessor (1997) indicate that there is evidence from USA, Britain and elsewhere that heavy and problematic drug use is frequently associated

with educational problems including truancy and early departure from full-time education (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 10).

The price and availability of both legal and illicit drugs are also important considerations in the drug issue. It is a case of price versus disposable incomes. Social support of drugs is also a factor to consider. Not one single theory is sufficient to explain the complexities and variety of drug taking behaviour. As people are individuals, so will individual factors influence individuals in different ways (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 11).

It is important for parents and educators to note that drug education has to be managed with many different approaches, keeping in mind the multifaceted list of causes which contribute to the problems.

2.10 Gender and Risk Taking

Gender is an important consideration in this debate. In most societies according to Farrow (1985), boys rated higher in risk taking behaviour involving alcohol and drugs and males use drugs more than females (Shiroma, 1994, p. 3). However, there are exceptions to this rule as females do misuse specific drugs more and take tranquilizers more. Women are changing now in their drinking patterns and are drinking more as society's mores change. Crouch (2004) reported that girls as young as twelve were drinking eight or more pre-mixed alcoholic drinks in one night, leading to "a trail of sexual activity and unwanted pregnancy" (Crouch, 2004, p. 11). From the American experience, older girls, who drink infrequently, prefer distilled spirits to beer. Because of the legal restrictions imposed on adolescents drinking in licensed premises, much of the under age consumption of alcohol begins at home, under parental supervision and during holidays and special occasions. As adolescents grow older, they begin the trend to drink outside the home and in contexts where there is no presence of adults (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 474).

Girls have a special set of circumstances when considered in the risk taking debate. It is their "over-socialization" which was brought to the fore as a major consideration in their lack of risk taking in the past. Girls are brought up to be "more sensitive" than boys, so they tend to suffer with a lower sense

of self-image and to have a higher concern with their appearance and popularity but are less prone to risk taking. There are more pressures on girls as they reach puberty and the treatment meted out to them by teachers and other adults has important consequences for their later self-esteem and association with risk taking (Wingood & Di Clemente, 1982, p. 2). Higbee remarks that “adolescence is a very fragile time for girls”, a time where “risk taking, eating behaviours, body changes and sexuality are all matters close to the heart of many teenage girls and parents” (Higbee, 1997, p. 1).

This research will be useful to discover whether “low self-image” does pressure and change the behaviour of the female participants in this study. On the positive side they have had the motivation and personal goals to enrol in a Senior Secondary College after the completion of compulsory High School education. However, historically, there has been a trend in Australian society to have two different standards of behaviour for males and females. This study could reveal then, whether Tasmanian females prove to be “lady-like”, and whether negative risk taking is a part of that perception.

Age is also a consideration in risk taking discussions. It is the young who are more likely to use illicit drugs, but they are less likely to smoke. Youth had more problems with psychoactive drug use and sometimes these risks involve serious drug misuse (Jessor and Jessor, 1997; MacGregor 1989; Shimson, 1981), (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 6). Kraft (1970), Barnes and Noble (1972), Lane (1976) and Silver (1977) indicated that there are different levels of association between psychoactive drug problems and psychological health (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 7). Drug substances are linked to one another in what is described as a developmental progression or series of stages starting with tobacco and/or alcohol use and this escalates to include marijuana and then other illicit drugs (Johnston et al., 1978; Kandel and Faust, 1975; Kandel & Yamaguchi, 1985). Whilst there is this progression in drug use, the likelihood of escalation from using one substance to using another is not high - one in five - in any one particular year during adolescence, according to the Elliott et al. (1989) report. The proportion of polydrug users at any adolescent stage is surprisingly, relatively small (10 percent or less) (as cited in Millstein, Petersen, & Nightingale, 1993, p. 131).

Clinical studies have noted a high level of stressful life experiences amongst those with serious alcohol and drug problems. These life problems can be caused in turn, as a result of the alcohol and/or drug misuse (Osborne, 1975; Melotte, 1975; Blumberg, 1981), (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p.7). For females the use of wine and mixed drinks has been associated with cigarette use, whilst beer ingestion has been linked with both cigarette and controlled substance use (Lipsitt & Mitnick, 1991, p. 16). Elliott and Morse (1984) also contend that there is an association between adolescent pregnancy, delinquency and drug use when the onset of sexual activity is very early (aged fifteen or under), (as cited in Lipsitt & Mitnick, 1991, p. 16). It must be noted that behaviours are interrelated in complex ways and all do not necessarily lead to substance abuse or delinquency (Lipsitt & Mitnick, 1991, p. 28).

An Australian study, published in 1999, used a sample of one hundred and sixty-six young people in six juvenile justice systems in New South Wales and found very high levels of alcohol and cannabis use in the month prior to detention. The females were engaging significantly more in HIV risk taking activity than boys and were three times more likely to have injected a drug, a month before detention, and were four times more likely to have shared injecting equipment than boys. A very high 80 percent were sexually active before incarceration, with a low level of awareness of Hep B and C (Copeland, Howard & Fleischmann, 1999, pp. 206-212).

2.11 Risk Taking and Health Concerns

“Human beings have a lifelong and long standing affinity for alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, opiates and allied substances...humanity’s liking for chemical methods of mood adaptation” (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 2). It has been recorded, in line with this statement, that many teenagers experiment with alcohol and illegal drugs and a proportion of them are regular users. Cannabis has been considered as harmless, but now there is good evidence that it can make mental health problems worse in adolescence and can double the risk of developing schizophrenia. Alcohol, despite publicity to the contrary, is the most common drug. Early sexual activity creates a greater risk of early pregnancy and health problems. Sexually transmitted diseases are common as

is HIV infection and AIDS is becoming more common (Timms, 2004, p. 3). Multiple partners and risky, unprotected intercourse are often signs of underlying emotional problems, or they could indicate a risk taking lifestyle.

There is significant evidence in the literature that excesses of alcohol, drugs and sexual activity could lead to health related problems in later life. Because blood passes through the kidneys and is filtered by them, harmful drugs and chemicals act as poisons, which are often returned to the body within urea, not being successfully filtered. Although the kidneys are strong, they eventually stop filtering the blood and kidney failure occurs (North West Kidney Centre, 2006, p. 1). Women are more responsive to alcohol, “particularly with respect to alcohol related liver disease, cardiovascular disease and brain damage” (Petersen, 2003, p. 1). Women are more susceptible to other diseases caused by alcohol, diseases such as “degenerative diseases of the skeletal muscle [myopathy] and heart muscle [cardiomyopathy]” (Petersen, 2003, p. 3).

There are also major liver conditions caused by alcohol consumption, including Hepatitis and Cirrhosis (Petersen, 2003, p. 9). Other serious conditions occur following sexual activity. These include venereal diseases such as Chlamydia, Genital Herpes, Gonorrhea, Hepatitis B and HIV Aids. These, in turn, can cause cervical and other cancers, liver disease, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility and pregnancy problems (United States of America Dept. of Health, 2006, pp. 1-5). Cocaine, heroin and methadone influence prenatal development severely during the whole time of pregnancy (Vialle et al., 2000, p. 169).

2.11.1 Risk Taking Prevention Strategies

Instead of promoting a “zero tolerance” approach, a system of gradual exposure to alcohol under adult supervision for the eighteen to twenty group is envisaged. Prohibition had always caused rebellion, so if this were removed from this age group, an improvement in the attitude to drinking recklessly may change. Another strategy being offered for debate is to provide a provisional drinking licence, similar to the restrictions implicit with the provisional driver’s licence. As with this type of licence, the young adult

would have time and place restrictions - drinking in food outlets before stipulated curfew time - say 11 p.m. Formal instruction about alcohol would be essential and a licensing exam is envisaged. Parents or authorities could revoke this licence. Should we lift the driving age to eighteen, or limit the number of passengers for provisional drivers? (Bennett, 2007, p.2). In America, in all of its fifty states, the drinking age was twenty-one. When it was lowered to eighteen, authorities argued that, from this age group, alcohol could be made available to younger high school students (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 475). Admittedly, whatever the legal age for drinking alcohol is designated to be, there will still be those who will engage in risky alcohol-induced behaviour, but public and self-regulation would encourage socially acceptable attitudes and non participation in activities associated with this drug. As Abbott-Chapman (2008) disclosed “We have an alcohol culture in Australia and young people think teenage drinking is normal, but when teenage drinking is related to multiple risk taking, it becomes a real health hazard” (p. 1).

Researchers (Stevens, Mott & Youells, 1996) have discovered that the drinking patterns amongst adolescents generally follow the adult models in their communities. Parents who drink, or who sanction drinking, are more likely to have adolescents who drink according to Barnes, Farell and Banerjee (1995). Likewise, parents who do not drink, are more likely to have children who do not and this applies to parents who are heavy drinkers, where this can lead to heavy or moderate drinking for the adolescents (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 475). By publishing and explaining real life experiences between parents and adolescents with alcohol, other parents will become more informed and sensitive about alcohol issues and will be able to include further strategies into their parenting and their own cultural contexts. By consulting appropriate publications, parents will be able to provide more informed advice on the rules relating to alcohol and will also be able to seek advice from the relative support agencies to assist them with this whole community problem (Burrows and Wright, 2003, p. 1).

This advice is particularly valuable and concurs with current trends in schools to provide this type of “reality” with guest speakers and current research

where actual narratives relate the social and health costs caused by alcohol problems. The effect is more tangible because the situations are “real” and the participants have survived to see the errors of their past habits. This study will complement the research already done in this area and will provide more information regarding the strategies needed to curb adolescent negative risk taking.

Moritz (1999) suggests that the message about risk taking and health concerns is not reaching our adolescents. This author advocates addressing statistical literacy which may affect the understanding of risk and ultimately decisions involving risk taking behaviours. The use of statistical literacy is advocated. This includes an understanding of chance measurement, with contexts in which risk statements are expressed (e.g. percentages about the decriminalization of marijuana) (p. 458). He also emphasizes the ways in which statistical relationships might be used or misused by groups to infer cause-effect relationships or to predict individual outcomes for specified clusters of people (p. 453).

Alcohol and religious involvement and church attendance are also related. Religiousness and frequency of church attendance are strongly related to abstinence. Church groups also run lengthy programmes aimed at moral lifestyles and self-control with the establishment of right learning patterns. These patterns will assist the children to respond to parental cues in specific situations and be able to transfer the concept to other situations. Abstainers usually come from people with less than eighth grade education, whilst the proportion of heavy drinkers come from those with a Grammar School education, being 6 percent to 15 percent of college graduates (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 475).

2.12 Psychology Background

Psychological researchers (Bukatko & Dachler (2004) maintain that the central feature of female development included the tendency to seek out and maintain relationships with others. This “degree of attachment...also influences the emergence of a [person’s] sense of self” (Slee, 2002, p.72).

This quality of attachment, according to Sroufe (1979), is related to the extent to which children will explore and master their view of the world (as cited by Slee, 2002, p. 72). According to Cobb, (1992), who quotes Marcia (1980; 1988), this sense of identity “refers to [a] coherent, purposeful sense of self” and includes one more feature such as “a self structure, [with] an organization of beliefs, abilities, habits and motives and a continuing personal history” (as cited in Cobb, 1992, p. 197). In this process, the adolescents expect to make decisions for themselves and have been able to provide feedback to themselves about their strong and weak points.

As Marcia continued, gaining a sense of self “is not an easy process” and is not finished “by the end of adolescence” (as cited in Cobb, 1992, p. 197). Formal reasoning is also an important component for adolescents and it has many implications for many areas of their future lives. Kohlberg (1976) stated, “Formal reasoners focus on how one ought to behave or should act whether or not people actually behave in that fashion” (as cited in Adams, 2000, p. 24). Consequently, Marcia’s (1996) identity paradigm is used by Berzonsky (2000) to reveal four identity groups of characteristics. “Identity achievers” engage in extensive soul searching to find their set of goals, values and life choices. Those with “identity moratoriums” engage in the present with active self-searching, but have not been able to form stable personal commitments, whilst those with “identity foreclosures” merely adopt the goals, values and other commitments from parents or other significant people without any significant self-searching. The “identity diffusers” are the adolescents who are not at that present time in their lives, in the process of self-exploration (as cited in Adams, 2000, p. 21).

McNay (2000) continues this line of reasoning, about identity, by suggesting, “that a coherent sense of self is not just an illusion, but fundamental to the way in which [an individual] interprets itself” (McNay, 2000, p. 18). Scholars have often attempted to understand this concept of “self definition from a variety of perspectives...historical, socio-cultural and developmental” (Kroger, 1996, p. 2). The “socio-conditioning of society...creates...problems of identity and self definition” according to researchers, Lapley et al. (1985) (as cited in Kroger, 1996, p. 2).

Adolescence is also concerned with the “developmental transformation of the sense of self and consequent ways of filtering and making sense of one’s life experience” (Kroger, 1996, p. 5). “Mastering psychic energy” is another problem, as well as coping “with the environment, let alone pursuing goals that will increase their skills” (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 20). Two types of psychic powers are displayed by adolescents-“psychic entropy”, and psychic “negentropy”. The first has “bad moods, passivity, lack of motivation and unfocused attention”, whilst the second “includes positive feelings towards self and others, happiness, friendliness and good cheer” (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 21). The second stage is “psychological activation, with action following action, without the need for thought or action” by the individual (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 24). The third stage of negentropy, “involves intrinsic motivation, spontaneous involvement with whatever is going on” whilst the fourth stage is personal “effective concentration” (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 25). Added to this is the development of identity achievement where the adolescents are “open to new possibilities” or they experience “identity foreclosure” where they “fail to question lifestyles or explore religion or career options” (Cobb, 1992, p. 197).

Another dimension studied by psychologists is that of emotions. Coleman (1996) defined an emotion as “a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states and range of propensities to act” (as cited in Vialle, Lysaght, & Verenikina, 2000, p. 117). This aspect is very relevant considering the adolescent’s desire for new and risky experiences.

Along with this search for identity, according to Josselton (1988) comes the need for adolescents “to include the concept of self in relation to others” so that this state is not seen in “separation”, but with equal weight being given “to a person’s relatedness to others” (as cited in Cobb, 1992, p. 440). This new, mature state “involves movement toward a greater capacity for relationships, but adding to this capacity are the definite qualities of “assertion and autonomy” (Cobb, 1992, p. 440).

Females, by contrast, are therefore not on a pathway to becoming independent, autonomous and self reliant, as is suggested for males, but on a

journey to making connections with others. This is not to be viewed as “dependency” but as a source of discovering gratification and self-fulfilment (Miller, 1991; Surrey, 1991). Friendship and belonging therefore, form an integral part of the female sense of self.

2.13 Sociology Background

Sociologists focus primarily on the social, economic and political contexts in which young people grow up and live. However, other studies of society are more concerned with the attitudes, expectations and views about young people, held by very powerful and influential adult groups. These views concern the sociologists who in turn examine adult attitudes to youth, their expectations of them and their place in society (Earle & Fopp, 1999, p. 404). The adolescent female can be “caught by her social class and ethnicity as well as the technical influences, societal norms and legal requirements” (Kroger, 1996, p. 2).

Young persons simultaneously face pressures “to shape their attention around goals, established by society...to attend school, do chores and conform to accepted behavioural norms” (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 20). Additionally, it is thought that parents, teachers, even peers, use reinforcements and threats to get them to follow societal values, even though they may conflict with the personal needs of the adolescent. Therefore, “Adolescents need to learn patterns of thoughts and action that will enable them to contribute to the community...otherwise their peers will be unwilling to share material resources and to respect them” (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 28).

The literature on family influences on adolescents emphasises the potential climate within the dynamics of family life for adolescents to progress to identity achievement and an increase of “self” (Minchin, 1998; Papini, Selby & Clark, 1998) but it has also been established that “boys receive more attention than girls from societal, parental and school perspectives” (Diamant & McNulty, 1995, p. 429). Historically and socially, there have always been double sexual standards (Reiss, 1960), with more permission for males than

females to engage in sexual behaviour, (Kim & Smith, 2000) (as cited in Adams, 2000, p. 109). Sexual abstinence is explained by students spending more time at school activities than with members of the opposite sex (Chilman, 1980), and more educationally motivated students holding less stereotypical sex role images (Cvetkovich et al., 1978). It is also contended that the frequency of church attendance is inversely related to involvement in sexual intercourse (Bingham et al., 1978), whereas more sexual behaviour indicates decreased religious commitment (Billy et al., 1988) (as cited in Adams, 2001, p. 108).

The emotional distance, which is experienced by parents with adolescents, is not a rejection of family connectedness, but an essential prerequisite for adolescent achievement and the experience of “self” (Heaven, 2001, p. 37). However, family life can impinge on adolescent development. One researcher, Surbey (1988, 1999) is quoted by Kim and Smith (2000) who stated that social stress and (the stress related to father absence in early childhood) could hasten the onset of puberty (as cited in Adams, 2000, p. 34). In fact “the first five to seven years in a family enables a child to assess the availability of resources, durability of parental bonds and reliability of others as a basis to develop his/her reproductive strategy” (Adams, 2000, p. 34). If there are adequate resources, there is a delay in the “onset of puberty”, with the opposite effect of “unstable parental bonds” and poor family conditions increasing the onset of puberty (Adams, 2000, p. 35).

All these disciplinary views are very helpful when beginning a task such as this type of research. They are helpful in understanding the influences shaping the female participants’ lives. Therefore, they will assist in the analysis of the information which will be provided in the questionnaires, interviews and policy documents.

2.14 Relationships with Parents

The “self” and “parent-child” relationship in the younger years is based on children’s compliance to parents’ views. To break this independence in adolescence, they have to risk expressing ideas about which “their parents

might not approve” (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 142). Grotevant and Cooper (1990) contended that “adolescents must learn to assert rather than to hide their ideas and to take responsibility for their ideas when parents challenge them”. The experience of individuality opens adolescents to the process of explaining themselves and the need to submit ideas to discussions from which validation might come. This is very evident in the relationships adolescents have with parents, but the novelty now manifests itself in that this “openness” is being applied to peer groups (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 142).

For “individualization” to begin, many elements are essential for the whole process to move in a definite direction. Adolescents must be prepared to assert the ideas their parents may not accept. They must be willing to defend and to discuss these ideas because they believe they are legitimate. In all this assertion, adolescents will still seek validation as well as advice from their parents, because they realize that parents are interested in them and are able to help them. In return adolescents are able to accept their parents’ perspectives because they understand them more as people at this stage (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 143). Younger and Smollar (1985) inform us from the studies that all disagreements with parents at this stage focus around certain aspects of adolescents’ lives. Key conflicts were free time and how they spend it, especially arriving home later than expected. Also at issue is the type of schoolwork they should be finishing. Gender issues surface here and reactions vary between fathers and mothers. Between daughters and fathers, 30 percent of conflict resolutions were compromises, where fathers extended the curfew hour after listening to their daughters’ reasons for being late, and through discussion, whereas with mothers and daughters, 38 percent of conflict resolutions were compromises. Fathers and sons had 27 percent of compromise situations, while sons and mothers scored the lowest score on compromises with 22 percent.

With regard to advice being sought from parents and friends, surprising results were gained with 53 percent of daughters discussing “future school and job plans” with mothers, while 82 percent would discuss these topics with fathers. Daughters stated that fathers were more likely to explain their

viewpoints and would not simply state an opposition. In the final analysis 20 percent of fathers would advise them about school grades and 76 percent about future plans. Sons and mothers' figures on these issues were 90 percent on school grades and 89 percent on school plans. Two-thirds of the sons in these studies stated that their mothers would give explanations of their views on these topics (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 143).

Smollar and Volpe's study (1981) revealed more gender specific comments. In this study there were four groups of 20 subjects in each of four specific age groups - 10 to 11, 14 to 15, 18 to 19, and 22 to 24. Vocabulary usage emphasizing adjectives used to describe the parent - child relationships, such as "happy", "relaxed", "secure", "joyful", declined sharply in the 14 to 15 group, but increased slightly in the 18 to 19 age group with references to parents. The negative adjectives of "angry", "defensive", "cold", "aloof", "rude" used against parents scored twenty-five times the use in the 14 to 15 age group, but the words only had twelve times the use in the 18 to 19 age group, rising slightly to fourteen times the use in the 21 age group.

Parents made a significant contribution to adolescence by treating their children in a more mature manner, yet at the same time demanding more of them by the way of responsible actions. This treatment added a seriousness to adolescence that is not apparent in younger age groups. Acknowledging this concept of individualization, implies that parents are beginning to recognize mutuality with their adolescent sons and daughters.

This is reflected in the usage of another category of "parent reference" adjectives such as "open", "loving", "caring" and "emotional". These words had thirteen times the use in the 18 to 19 adolescent age group, compared to ten times in the 14 to 15 age group and fifteen times in the older group, 22 to 24. Words in the "anxious" category were "confused", "upset", "tense", "discouraged" and "frustrated" with seventeen times the use in the 18 to 19 aged group compared to nineteen times in the 14 to 15 age group and twenty times in the 22 to 24 age group (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 143).

This research will clarify the concepts of the construction of being an adolescent and how these occur within the context of the interpersonal

relationships of these female adolescents. More understanding will be added to our knowledge about the distinct conceptions of self during the child and adolescent stages - one based on the relationship with parents and the other based on relationships with close friends.

In yet another study, ninety-two adolescents were asked to describe what they believed they were obliged to do for their parents and why they felt that it was important to do these things. A total of 56 percent said obedience was obligatory, whilst the remainder said that daughters should talk to and spend time with their fathers. The reasons given centred on fathers' general emotional needs. Examples for both parents include:

"She has a hard time of it."

"It makes him feel good."

"He had feelings too."

Daughters added that they were pleasant and helpful with their mothers, again because of her emotional needs and through the need to "repay" them for their commitment. Examples include:-

"It shows I love her."

"Adults need a lot of love."

"She has given me so much time and energy; it's the least that I can do."

Sons also felt a sense of obligations to their fathers, "helping [them] around the house...because they have helped [us] in the past." They also mentioned that they were obedient, doing "what he says...[out of respect or him]...for what he has done for [them]". The sons also wanted "to talk" to their fathers "to make [the] relationship better"(as cited in Bosma and Jackson, 1990, pp. 143-144).

When referring to the respect paid to their mothers, the sons also commented on the contribution mothers had made to their lives - "she's done so much for me, she deserves it" and "[I] owe her." Sons also were aware of the burden of parenting commenting "it's a rough time of life for a parent". Fathers'

assistance was also noted with “[he] supports you” - a good reason for obedience to parents. The sons were also aware that this compliance to parental wishes would lead to a “smoother” passage of interactions, because the adolescents wanted to enjoy their relationships with parents because of their love for them (as cited in Bosma and Jackson, 1990, pp. 143-144).

It was not clear from these studies above whether the changes in adolescent relationships preceded, followed on, or concurred with their level of understanding of parents as persons. However, it was clear from these studies that adolescents do begin to perceive that their parents are individuals and parents in turn begin to treat their adolescents in a more “individualistic” light.

2.15 Changes in Adolescent/Parent Relationships

Comments made by adolescents between the ages of fifteen and eighteen show the extent of changes in the adolescent/parent relationship. One fifteen year old reflecting about her relationship with her father stated that “We can talk and express our feelings freely, without feeling that we are going to hurt each other”. She also added that she treated him “like a person” and that the power-base between them had changed. “He doesn’t have much power over me. He realized that there was a common gap and he has tried to overcome it.” A “closeness” between the two had developed as a consequence of this realization. An eighteen-year-old female had had an opposing set of experiences. At first she used to be a “Daddy’s girl” but this had changed when she had begun to have her own personal views. Consequently she had to avoid issues where there were going to be any conflicts. As she had grown older, her father had become “more possessive” because “he doesn’t want me to grow up.”

Two fifteen year olds, one female talking about her father and the other a male talking about his mother, both agreed that each parent was “a person” and not in the words of the male “a God-like” figure. Another sixteen-year-old male, speaking about his mother, felt that she was “more critical” of him, but that he expected more. As he matured, he had been given more freedom and responsibility. Being able to talk about more adult issues, was also a positive reaction for this adolescent. One eighteen year old also reiterated the maturity

and freedom aspects of the changing relationship between adolescent children and parents with the comment “I accept her more as a friend” (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 144).

Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) and Montemeyor (1985) all explain that with the relationship process which occurs between adolescent and parent, a type of de-idealization occurs. Parents, as already noted, are now constructed as people and at this point adolescents do not direct their activities directly with the autonomy of the parent in mind, but rather they are more in search of parental acceptance and respect. After the de-idealization stage, parents and adolescents begin a new mode of communication designed to encourage adolescents to explore their individuality further. With these changes come concomitant changes the adolescent has of “self”. Any problems occurring with parenting are also added to school performance and to the adolescents’ general value systems. Montemayer (1982) also contended that the adolescent-parental conflict was also easy to find in their relationships with parents.

However, it was here that the value of friends surfaced, as they fully understood these problems and were regarded as being in the role of “credible experts” (as cited in Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 142). Youness and Smoller (1985) identified that adolescents still do return to parents for advice especially in critical moments. They can and do work together through strong mutual concerns. Parents [especially fathers] were also considered crucial in forming pertinent relationships with adolescents to allow a smooth transition into life of work (Mortimer, Lorence and Lumber, 1986) (Bosma & Jackson, 1990, p. 42).

It would appear that the information from this study about the aspects of friendships, responsibility and mutuality would augment and add to adults’ understanding of the adolescent stage of life.

2.16 Education and Counselling Background

Education professionals can view adolescents and their behaviours and needs as being more problematic, but adolescence can be a time of normal

functioning. Children of all ages now have legal rights, so teachers, and other professionals working with them, have to be more aware of the views and wishes of their students, so subsequently there needs to be sophisticated models of counselling practices established in education facilities. Counsellors should be aware that friends are often consulted before they are approached, in situations where a degree of appropriateness is an issue (Branwhite, 2000, p. 18). Teachers should be aware that they are not social workers, yet they are very significant in the lives of their students. Their influence, Galbo (1994) contended is, surprisingly, associated with teachers' social characteristics as opposed to their cognitive and life skills (as cited in Branwhite, 2000, p. 15).

In the particular College where this study was undertaken, keeping at a distance from the students' problems was difficult, having support teacher roles in addition to the normal teaching duties. However, there were many professional teacher/counsellors and other experts employed by the Senior College, so that difficult problems could be referred to those with more expertise.

2.17 Social Capital

By using a basis of social capital on which to build an analysis of risk taking, a language common to social and political issues current, at this time, will permit a broad exploration of the key issues concerning adolescent female risky behaviour and the reactions of the young women who participated in this study. Former studies of teacher behaviour reflect on the significance of family, school and community influences and the impact that these have on the genesis and development of female expectation (Wood, 1998, p. 105).

Putman continues to explain that "social capital is an important resource for individuals and it can greatly affect their ability to act and to perceive a quality of life" (Putman, 2000, p. 319). Schools and students also fall into this type of networking social system, developing a closed system to strengthen the role of the more dominant participants - the parents and the school itself.

The dynamics of the family provide varying views of the characteristics of social capital. In one sense social capital can be seen as existing within "a

collectively with people acting selflessly” (Coleman, 1990, p. 310). This type of social capital assists “the development of nascent social movement, from a small group of dedicated, inward looking people who work on a common task”, this task being the raising of the children (Coleman, 1990, p. 310). The strong and effective sanctions and norms for behaviour imposed by parents can assist in keeping the young adolescents from the desire to use adolescence as a time of experimentation and fun times which could lead to risk taking. On the positive side Coleman suggests that individuals in families have access to “credit slips” or social capital they can draw upon at any stage, particularly from families with extensive patriarchal and matriarchal “credit slips” (Coleman, 1990, p. 308).

On the negative side, parents and children develop social networks where one party is subordinate to the other and where one participant is more powerful than the other. From another negative viewpoint, the social capital inherent in the family, can be restrictive, coming from the efforts of the “inward looking” group which influences the children. Putman (2000) continues the negative review of family social capital with the observation that “neither marital nor parental status boosts membership in other social groups” and that “marriage and children are negatively correlated with membership of sports, political or cultural groups”. “Married couples are homebodies”, he observed and contact by family members with external groups and involvement in them is limited (Putman, 2000, p. 78). This concept of social capital could be extended to young women and their sense of public space. Bloustein (2003) asserts that it is still considered unwise and unsafe for a girl to be on a public street for any time, especially at night.

Yet, Bloustein found through her research that gender perceptions of any dimension of a female’s experience were never far removed from those governing her ethnicity or social class or any other aspect of her life. These perceptions governed her use of “legitimate space” in the social arena, some areas being seen as unwelcoming and others as refuges, safe places or spaces for play. Those females, who came from social networks with very defining gender identity and perceptions, experienced far more external control than those where sexual equity was established as the norm and was practised as

confirmed by other researchers (Elley & Inglis, 1995; Tsolidis, 1995), (Bloustein, 2003, p. 160). The social relations and “moral” values that constitute young women’s social networks become the “normality” as defined by their gender and familial and social collectives (Bloustein, 2003, p. 161).

The immediate social world for most Senior College students would differ from the viewpoint of these researchers. Their Senior College life, with perhaps long travel times to the courses and part-time employment, could prove that there were limited opportunities to develop their social capital. This study will disclose the impact of the networks within the homes, the Senior College and employment venues on the adolescent females’ lives.

2.18 Risk Activities

2.18.1 Alcohol Background

Alcohol, as explained by the Australian Foundation for Alcohol and Drug Education (March 2003), is a drug, which is colourless, tasteless and one which easily dissolves in water. It is a sedative, hypnotic drug which depresses the central nervous system. As the level of fluid in each person varies, alcohol affects people differently, particularly adolescents who are generally smaller and lighter than adults. Adolescent women are also lighter and smaller than males in this group, so they are even more vulnerable to the affects of alcohol, becoming intoxicated more quickly.

2.18.2 Affects of Alcohol

Alcohol slows reactions and coordination is impaired because the messages sent to the brain become confused. The sedative affect of this drug slows the brain’s ability to process information which can lead to memory loss and lesser learning ability. The depression of the nervous system can also lead to emotional instability with demonstrations of anger and frustration, leading to violent behaviour. Behaviour can also be further affected because the alcohol passes straight into the blood stream and then transforms the behaviour immediately. At first the drinker may appear to be more confident, but this only disguises the lack of coordination which will follow (Australian Drug

Foundation, 2003, p. 1). Alcohol also has an effect on the liver which processes this drug. The liver is only able to process one drink per hour and therefore a more rapid intake will result in intoxication. Nicholls (2006) recorded the new research information that binge drinking is closely allied to the later development of breast, colon and liver cancer. Even the advice of one drink per day for one's health is now being refuted because of these links of alcohol with cancer. Speeding is a particular problem among adolescents especially when they have been drinking. These individuals are also more likely to be involved with other risky behaviours such as running red lights, making illegal turns, driving after marijuana use and not wearing seat belts (Millstein et al., 1993, p. 309).

2.18.3 Drinking Trends in America

Alcohol tends to be the drug of choice among youths yet, according to Rice and Dolgin (2002) it is not often recognized as a drug. The reasons as to why adolescents drink is in some cases related to adult life, because adolescents perceive drinking as an adult custom, and it reflects adult behaviour in our society (Halebsky, 1987). Drinking to excess is associated with a distancing between the young and their families (Crowe, Philbin, Richards, & Crawford, 1998; Protinsky & Shilts, 1990). Peer pressure is also another factor in adolescent drinking, fulfilling the need for peer identification, sociability and friendship (Johnson, 1986). It relieves problems of loneliness and anxiety (Mijuskovic, 1988). It is also a means of rebellion and alienation from adults, especially parents and they often receive little help from their families (Windle & Miller-Tutzauer, 1992) (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 477).

Statistics from the United States (NIDA, 2000a) indicate that 25 percent of eighth-graders and 50 percent of twelfth graders indicate having at least one drink per month, so the introduction to drinking alcohol covers a good proportion of the American youth (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 473). In the Monitoring The Future study by NIDA (1999), 30 percent of high school seniors and 16 percent of eighth graders reported at least one episode of binge drinking in the two weeks prior to the survey. The risks faced by

these adolescents include the elevated risk of school failure, drunken driving and other alcohol-related problems (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 473).

Alcohol is also a factor in crime (Dawkins & Dawkins, 1989) and is also a factor involved in half of all homicides, and is a major factor in child abuse and family violence. A report by the American National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration (1997) showed that 20 percent of adolescent drivers had been involved in fatal accidents as a result of drinking alcohol. Researchers have also found that heavy drinking, prior to sexual activity, compromised the adolescents' ability to use contraceptives (Flanigan, McLean, Hall & Propp, 1990), whilst alcohol abuse during pregnancy is said to be the cause of over 200,000 premature deaths a year (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 473).

Hanson, Heath and Rudy (1997) describe alcohol rituals which are common in stories of rituals in America. One named "21 for 21" involves drinking 21 shots of liquor, one for every year of their twenty-one birthdays. Another practice involves the "Big Game" in which College students drink themselves insensible and fall to their deaths from balconies. To prevent these practices, aged-based prohibition has been increased, including policing and task forces aimed at quarantining young adults from the harmful effects of drinking (as cited in Rice and Dolgin, 2002, p. 476).

Correlations of factors with drinking are numerous. The proportion of heavier drinkers increases fairly steadily, from 6 percent of those with grammar school education to 15 percent of college graduates. Both moderate and heavier drinkers increase as social class rises, according to Harris and colleagues (1974) (as cited in Rice and Dolgin, 2002, p. 476).

Adolescent alcohol use is highest when fathers are managers or professionals, while the largest proportion of heavy drinkers live in urban and suburban areas according to former researchers (Gibbons, Wylie, Echterling & French, 1986) (as cited in Rice and Dolgin, 2002, p. 476).

Research by Marston, Jacobs, Singer, Widaman and Little (1988) found that high school students, who abstained from drugs, alcohol and tobacco,

generally claimed better health, better social relationships and a happier state of mind. Additionally, the incidence of delinquency is decidedly higher when associated with over-drinking, while heavy drinking is associated with crimes such as shoplifting, breaking and entering and auto theft. There is also a positive correlation between heavy television viewing and alcohol use, particularly if associated with youthful drinking (Defoe & Breed, 1988) (as cited in Rice and Dolgin, 2002, p. 476).

Tucker (1985) suggested that it is plausible that this portrayal of young people drinking teaches, in a subtle fashion, a lifestyle that is good, healthy and harmless. Loneliness is another factor in alcohol use particularly with adolescent females (18 to 20 years of age). Low general support and control by parents are associated with increased drinking (Foxcroft & Lowe, 1991)(as cited in Rice and Dolgin, 2002, p. 476).

2.18.4 Alcohol and Binge Drinking in Australia

The amount of alcohol consumed in Australia is not decreasing despite the ageing population in this country. Many young people, men and women are consuming more alcohol. The latest Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) Report, Families in need of support (2008), highlights the biggest problem for Australian families, this being binge drinking by young persons (Australian National Council on Drugs, 2008, p. 1). Binge drinking is defined in an earlier study as “five or more drinks on one occasion” in a study of youth and health risks (Carr-Gregg, Enderby & Glover, 2003, p. 2). In the Australian report (2008), the figures provided show that “In any given week 1 in 10 (or 168,000) 12 to 17 year olds had reported binge drinking/or drinking at harmful levels [males...7 or more drinks on one day and females 5 or more on the day], (ANCD, 2008, p. 1).

As a sharp contrast there were only 0.5% or 1 in 200, 12 year olds who drank at harmful levels (ANCD, 2008, p. 1). The report also disclosed that 451,000 children live in households where they are at risk of exposure to binge drinking by one adult (ANCD, 2008, p. 2). The ANCD Chairman, Dr. John Herron, concludes from the report “that drug and alcohol use by young people has become normalized and is often seen as a rite of passage to adulthood”, a

comment very disturbing in its import (ANCD, 2008, p. 2). Sadly the majority of treatment providers in Australia, do not currently provide direct services for families who have a young person with alcohol or drug problems” (ANCD, 2008, p. 3).

Former studies indicated that seventy percent of young women engage in binge drinking at some time with 19 per cent doing so on a weekly basis (Carr-Gregg, Enderby & Glover, 2003, p. 2). Twenty-two percent of females, 14-19 years, drink between nine and thirty alcoholic drinks on one day (Carr-Gregg, Enderby & Glover, 2003, p. 3).

According to Stockwell (2003), a Curtin University study recorded that 80 percent of the alcohol, drunk by adolescents, is being consumed by the 18 to 24 age group in risky binge drinking sessions (as cited in Curtin University, 2003, p. 1). According to a later report (2004) “about half the men in Australia, aged 14 to 24, and one third of the women in the same age group, drink irresponsibly once a month, consuming six to thirty drinks in one session” (Corkill, 2004, p. 5). This binge drinking for women includes the “14-17 year olds [who] regularly consume up to 30 drinks in one session” according to a Salvation Army survey reported by Corkill (2004). “Girls, as young as twelve and a half, can start drinking” according to a study by Tindle, a counsellor and psychologist from the Queensland University of Technology (as cited in Corkhill, 2004, p. 15).

A 2005 report of a longitudinal study of antisocial behaviour among a representative sample of Victorian adolescents, recorded alcohol use was common for 85 percent but fewer had used marijuana at 19 percent and very few, less than 4 percent, used hard drugs (Australian Temperament Project, 2005, p. 3).

Binge drinking accounts for most of the 3,500 deaths per year from alcohol related harm. The way alcohol is an accepted, central part of our culture and our acceptance of excessive drinking and being drunk are aspects of this alcohol problem that must form the basis for immediate reflection. According to a survey conducted for the Salvation Army (2002) in Australia, the average age for children to begin drinking is “less than 14” (as cited in Coleman,

2002, p. 1). A high 63 percent has had their first drink by fourteen and 14 percent by the age of eleven (as cited in Salvation Army, 2002, p. 1). This survey stated that “the younger a person is when they start to drink, the more likely they are to drink more than 30 drinks a week” (as cited in Coleman, 2002, p. 1). This drinking - which is a hazard to one’s health and known as binge drinking - is common among the 18 to 24 age group and is the main cause of 93 percent of health problems in young men and 82 percent in young women (Coleman, 2002, p. 2).

Other frightening revelations from this survey show that the binge drinking has reached epidemic proportions amongst young males and females in this country (Salvation Army, 2002)(as cited in Coleman, 2002, p. 2).

For 19 percent of females and 54 percent of males, a binge drinking session lasted for four hours whilst alcohol consumption on an average weekly rate has doubled over the last 10 years. Ten years earlier, 1992, 14 percent admitted that they had consumed six drinks or more, whilst in 2002 it was 28 percent (Salvation Army, 2003, p. 1). Family income is also a factor. In those families with incomes over \$50,000, drinking commences at 15, but for those earning only \$25,000, drinking commences at 18. Young women increasingly drink to “fit into social occasions”, while men drink “to relax” (Salvation Army, 2002, p. 2). The young girls in a study by Bloustein (2003) in Adelaide (South Australia) revealed their common activity, using a combination of alcohol and amphetamines and the regular taking of “Dope, acid trips and Rohypnol”. They also talked about how boring life would be without drugs (Bloustein, 2003, p. 54).

The Salvation Army sees 30,000 people a year trying to rid addiction to alcohol and drugs and as a result the Governments of Australia have had to implement educational programmes to counteract the effects of these excessive behaviours. The trends in the drinking behaviour of young people in recent years affect many more people than their immediate peer group because of the longer-term problems they cause, with the associated health problems.

On a positive note, an earlier study by Lipsitt and Mitnick (1991) suggested that self-derogation and the cathartic use of leisure prove to be stable over time and form greater pleasure than drinking. These authors also quote Kandel and Logan's study (1984) whose findings suggested that a considerable number of young people reduce or even quit their drinking habits after a time of experimentation (Lipsitt & Mitnick, 1991, p. 206).

The research on alcohol is very concerning for those involved with adolescents. The studies reviewed in this chapter illustrate graphically the enormity of the problem and provide credibility for what this research will reveal about this negative risk taking activity in one Tasmanian region.

2.18.5 Sexual Activity

Adolescence is a time when the body is developing the capacity to generate life and by the end of puberty both males and females are able to procreate (Futris & McDowell, 2002) (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 88). For parents talking to their teenage children about their sexuality and the biological changes can be difficult, whereas for the adolescents themselves it becomes a very significant part of their private lives and the discussion of sexual activity can be problematic. Gaining accurate information about sexual activity, is a problem because of the reluctance of adolescents to co-operate in surveys or to tell the truth. Self-reports are often inaccurate (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 88).

Despite many and varied sources of information, adolescents are still very unaware, being uninformed or misinformed about their sexuality (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 204). Sources of sexual information according to a survey of 700 male and female respondents from 9 to 73 years of ages (Ansuini, Fiddler-Woite & Woite, 1996) come from a wide variety of sources such as siblings, teachers, parents, relatives, friends, mass media, literature and other miscellaneous sources. Previous research indicated "Parents often find initiating and sustaining discussions about sexuality with teenagers difficult". This leads to a superficiality of knowledge and "guilt, mystery and controversy" surrounding the subject (Moore & Rosenthal, 1993, 63).

Today adolescents are far more open and honest about sex and have little hesitancy in talking about it. The increasing sexual permissiveness of the young, especially girls, and the fact that society now is pluralistic as far as sexual morals are concerned, contribute to some of the changes which have occurred. Martin (1984) indicated that in general adolescents now accept an individual ethic, including the fact that individuals must decide for themselves. Whilst sexual drives have not changed during each generation, the amount of media influence, such as television, movies and magazines, on contemporary adolescents is far greater in today's society. Despite this factor impinging on our lives, adolescents are still uninformed or misinformed about their sexuality (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 204).

However, according to Kotchik (2001), half of high school graduates in America will have begun sexual activity. The percentage is higher for males than females and for minority groups and teens from lower socio-economic households (Futris & McDowell 2002). According to the Child Trends Database in 2001, male high students were more likely than female students to have ever had sexual intercourse [48 percent compared to 43 percent]. Age was also a determinant as sexual activity increases with age, with 34 percent of Grade 9 students compared to 61 percent of Grade 12 students being sexually experienced (Child Trends Data Base, 2003, pp. 1-2). Age is also a factor in the use of contraceptives, this use being associated with the age of first sexual activity. Educational expectations also play a part in sexual activity. The higher the adolescents' educational expectations, the less likely they are to have premarital sexual intercourse (Ohanessian & Crockett, 1993; Scott-Jones & White, 1990; Wyatt, 1989). The higher the parents' educational aspirations, the less sexually active these adolescents tend to be (Miller & Sneesby, 1988). Murry (1986) suggested that the children of less-educated parents tend to have a higher incidence of early coital behaviour (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 209).

The older the adolescent is at first sexual experience, the greater is the chance of the use of contraception at the most recent incidence of intercourse (Child Trends Data Base, 2003, p. 1). Rice and Dolgin (2002) concede that persuading sexually active teenagers to use contraceptives is a challenge.

Even those who do not want pregnancy, often do not use contraceptives. Some are misinformed about safe times for sex and the likelihood of pregnancy and many do not believe that pregnancy will happen to them. Only a small percentage of unmarried adolescents want to be pregnant out of a false belief about being in love and that pregnancy will ensure marriage. They deny the consequences of marriage or, according to Milan & Kilmann (1987), are hesitant to obtain help for fear of parental disapproval (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 218). Adolescents, who rely on television for information about sexuality, will receive the message that premarital and extramarital sex with multiple partners is acceptable and commonplace, according to the researchers (Borman & Schneider, 1998, p. 53).

Research in Washington D.C., (1995) reported about teenage girls who at that time were pregnant and those who had engaged in HIV related sexual risk taking. The research indicated that these women had viewed more television programmes which had portrayed violence or depicted abusive sexual acts with women and programmes which were sexually demeaning towards women (Goodwin, Ovnicek & Korschun, 1995, p. 1). The teens, who in this study, had not used condoms for sexual activity during the previous month, showed that 70 percent had viewed more programmes with violence. Those with no condom use during the last sexual encounter also had a greater percentage (66.8) of having viewed programmes depicting violence. This was higher than for those viewing programmes with men abusing women. Those with multiple sex partners also had a greater percentage (50.9) for watching television shows where women were being treated in a sexually condescending manner (Goodwin et al., 1995, p. 1). One group (56.1 percent) of these teenagers also had a history of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) (as cited in Goodwin et al., 1995, p. 1).

Again, this type of research is disturbing and reflects the different moral standards now evident within the adolescent group. The research in this study will disclose whether there has been a lessening of religious influences in the participants' lives, and whether they had developed their own standards towards risky behaviours to the detriment of their health.

2.18.6 Causes of Early Sexual Activity

Studies show that teenagers are at higher risk of early initiation into sexual activity through parental, family and peer influences. Living in a single parent home is also a factor. Parental divorce during the early teen years has been associated with the early onset and increased frequency of sexual activity in females. These trends occur due to less monitoring and supervision, a factor in single parent households. Siecus - the Sexuality, Information and Education Council of The United States - reports on a survey which questioned 2034 students - male and female in nearly even proportions - about their sexual activity and the number of hours in which they were unsupervised, to investigate whether there were links between the two. More than half - 56 percent - reported being unsupervised for at least four or five hours or more per day, whilst 48 percent reported being involved or planning to participate in after-school activities. The finding indicated that the adolescents left unsupervised were the ones to participate most often in sexual activity at home. The more hours an adolescent was left unsupervised; say for more than thirty hours per week, the higher the incidence of STDs. For girls the result was 19.5 percent for those left unsupervised for more than thirty hours per week. Using school and community-based activities which are supervised will, according to this survey, reduces the opportunities for all young people to engage in high-risk behaviour resulting in serious infections (Whalen, Splendorio & Chiarello, 2007, p. 10).

An Australian study of one hundred and sixty-six young people in six juvenile justice centres in New South Wales found that there had been very high levels of alcohol and cannabis use a month prior to detention. These drugs also contributed to the girls engaging significantly more in HIV risk taking with boys. Eighty per cent of the adolescents were sexually active before their incarceration. There were low levels of knowledge about Hepatitis B and C. (Copeland, Howard & Fleischmann, 1999, pp. 206-212).

Another factor in early sexual activity is the influence of an older sibling, especially a sister who may be sexually active and/or had had a child. Adolescents are also influenced by the perception they have of their peer

group. If they perceive that their peers are sexually active, true or not, they will be more likely to become sexually active. If puberty begins earlier, teenagers tend to mature earlier and to associate with older groups which can influence earlier sexual activity. Deviant behaviour, such as substance abuse and delinquency at this adolescent age, is also a factor in early sexual activity of a risky nature, behaviour which in this context is seen to be the norm, rather than deviant. Those teenagers, who have been subjected to involuntary sexual activity as children, are also more likely to begin sexual activity at an early age, to have more sex partners and to be less likely to use contraception.

In America, about 7 percent of young women reported having been forced into their first sexual experience and almost 25 percent indicated that their first experience was unwanted and was done solely to please a partner. A very high 70 percent of girls, under thirteen, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute (1999), indicated that their first experience was either forced or unwanted. Surprisingly, with the earlier engagement with sexual activity and the later marrying ages, most sexually active young people show no signs of having large numbers of partners. Seidman and Reider (1994) disclosed that the preferred pattern for serial monogamy, being with one partner at a time, is still preferable (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 205). Even so adolescent boys are still more likely to separate sex from the emotion of love (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 206). Alcohol and drug users are also factors in the onset of early sexual activity. These adolescents are more likely to engage in unprotected sex and/or to have multiple sex partners according to other researchers (Futris and McDowell, 2002).

2.18.7 Consequences of Teenage Sexual Activity

The short duration of adolescent relationships makes them more prone to multiple sexual partners, which places them at a much greater risk of contracting STDs, and the highest rates of these - gonorrhea, syphilis and Chlamydia - are found among teenagers from fifteen to nineteen. The failure to use condoms adds to the risk of these diseases. Teen birth rates have declined in America since 1991, but this country still has the highest teen pregnancy rate compared to other industrialized nations. Nearly one million

(20 percent) of sexually active 15-19 females in America become pregnant each year (Child Trends Data Base, 2003, p. 2). Strategies, to prevent this, included teenagers being instructed about abstinence, pregnancy, STDs and avoidance of sexual activity (Child Data Base, 2003, p. 2). European studies indicated that 25 percent of all people with HIV had contracted this when teenagers. Particular groups of teenagers - those with homosexual relationships and intravenous drug users - using sex for drugs went on to even riskier behaviours according to one researcher (Jager, 2004, p. 19). Excessive alcohol use is associated with a range of other health risk behaviours, including unsafe sex, unwanted pregnancy, drink-driving and road accidents, violence and criminal activity (Carr-Greg, Enderby & Glover, 2003, p. 3).

2.18.8 Drug Use

The very recent report by the Australian National Council on Drugs (2008) (ANCD) indicate that “237,000 [or 1 in 7] secondary school children have used cannabis” during the previous twelve months (Australian National Council on Drugs, 2008, p. 1). In addition it is noted that “78,000 children live in a households where there is at least one daily cannabis user”, and “27,000 children live in households where an adult is using metamphetamines monthly” (ANCD, 2008, p. 2).

The problem with drugs is the abuse, not the actual use of the substances (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 455). Both physical addiction and psychological dependence are dimensions of the same topic. In physical addiction, the body builds up a physical need for the drug, resulting in withdrawal symptoms if not taken, whilst the psychological dependence results in the person not being able to function without the drug (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 455). Heroin was initially refined from morphine and today is being injected less and smoked or snorted, reducing the health dangers from contacting HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) by sharing injection needles. O’Brien and Cohen (1984) warned that mixing heroin and alcohol or other depressants could be fatal (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 455). Heroin and morphine are the most addictive drugs and users quickly develop dependence. Cocaine is derived from a South American plant and acts as a stimulant, not a depressive.

It is sniffed or injected and lessens appetite and increases alertness, but the effects are nervousness, irritability, restlessness, mild paranoia, physical exhaustion, mental confusion, loss of weight, serious nasal afflictions, fatigue or depression with withdrawal (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 457). Marijuana, made from the dried leaves of the wild hemp plant, is by far the most widely used illegal substance. Hashish is another form of this drug, obtained from the resin extracted from the unfertilized female flowers and is much higher in the key ingredient 9-THC, up to 28 percent compared to 1-3 percent for marijuana. There are no withdrawal symptoms with small amounts or use of weak varieties, but physical dependence on high doses can result in irritability, decreased appetite, sleep disturbance, sweating, tremors, vomiting and diarrhoea (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 460).

Because human behaviour is both varied and confusing, its attendant problems cause many consequences. Plant and Plant (1992) reported on research into the causes of drug use (Goodwin, 1976; Kaanman, Tabakoff & Sato, 1989; Kozlowski, 1991; Partenen, Bruun & Markanen, 1960) where constitutional factors are considered important in understanding this problem (as cited in Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 7). Genetic predispositions to use drugs or to become dependent on them or biological and psychological traits to be stimulated with depressant or hallucinogenic drugs must be taken into account. Some humans like the particular effects of some drugs and these characteristics can be common within generations of families, from both social and biological factors.

Family and extended family members, with household residents, can also be held responsible for encouraging adolescent substance abuse. Subgroups, noted by Jessor and Jessor (1977), demonstrated this type of activity, using substances “for self-regulation and the control of emotional distress” (as cited in Millstein, Petersen & Nightingale, 1993, p. 270). The converse situation for the family suggests that “family structure and styles of parenting determine cohesion and the bonding of the adolescent to the norms and behaviours of the family unit” making the “peer relationships less salient” and therefore these adolescents are more insulated against “the choices regarding drug use” (as cited in Millstein, Petersen & Nightingale, 1993, p. 271).

Age can be a contributing factor in this dilemma in that the young are more likely to use illicit drugs because of their interest in taking risks and in testing their limits. The level of intelligence is not a factor in drug use, as many do not lack intelligence and have information about the drugs and the risks involved. Researchers have also found differing levels of association between dangerous psychoactive drug problems and psychological ill health (Barnes & Noble, 1972; Kraft, 1970; Lane, 1976; Silver, 1977). Clinical studies have also noted a high level of stressful life events amongst those with serious alcohol and drug problems (Osborne, 1975; Melotte, 1975; Blumberg, 1981). The converse is also in evidence whereby drug or alcohol misuse can cause the stressful events (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 7). Hedonism can also be blamed for drug abuse. Because it is mostly recreational, drug use to some extent is motivated by enjoyment and from other researchers, Rice and Dolgin, (2002) fun and sensual pleasure. Curiosity also plays a part with initial drug use (Grobe 1970; Davies & Stacey 1972). A wide range of environmental factors must also be considered. These factors include socio-cultural factors, socio-economic status, poverty, truancy, delinquency and family backgrounds (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 8). It can also be used as a means of rebellion, protest and expression of dissatisfaction (Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 464). In spite of attempts (Fazey, 1977; Plant, 1981) to identify an “addictive personality” or a unique “alcohol dependent” or “drug dependent” individual, none has been delineated (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 5). However, institutionalized problem alcohol or drug users do exhibit high rates of problem characteristics (Plant & Plant, 1992, p. 8).

2.18.9 Prevention Strategies

The Federal Government in America has set national goals through its Healthy People 2010 Initiative. These goals aim to increase the age of those who remain virgins by age fifteen to 88 percent, from 79 percent for males and 81 percent for females. For those who remain virgins from aged 17, the aim is to increase this to 75 percent from 62 percent with females and 57 percent amongst young males (Child Trends Data Base, 2003, p. 2). A key resource is the adolescents themselves. Fine (1988) advocated the ideas of

opening up “a discourse of desire in the area of sexuality education”. This discourse “would invite adolescents to explore what feels good and bad, desirable and undesirable, grounded in experience, needs, and limits” (as cited in Millstein, Petersen & Nightingale, 1993, p. 273). Discourses about other risky behaviours could also be held and, besides providing the background information, “alternatives” could be promoted (Millstein et al., 1993, p. 273).

The deepest fear for parents is the death or serious injury of their children in a road accident. The statistics show that 14 percent of young drivers - both male and female aged 18-24, have experienced an accident in the last twelve months (Cornford & Delaney, 2004, p. 21). Regarding drink-driving, tough new laws (New South Wales, 1998), which doubled the penalties in most offences, have been branded a failure as there has not been a change with people re-offending in Sydney and there has only been a small decrease in the rest of the state. Novice drivers had been expected to adhere to a zero blood alcohol level, but “the overall rate of alcohol-related car accidents had remained constant”, according to the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics (as cited in Nicholls, 2004, p. 1).

One way to prevent adolescent injury and death from driving would be to make licences harder to pass. Six months on L-Plates, at least a whole year on red P-Plates and another two years on green P-Plates, were rules introduced four years ago in New South Wales. Drink-driving is also totally banned and speed limits are increased as the driver's expertise and experience progresses (Davis, July 2004, p. 23). A ban on night -time driving and a limit to the number of passengers are two more of the strategies suggested to ease the road toll amongst the adolescent population (Ivers, 2004, p. 24). Higher taxes on full strength beers - the most frequently used alcohol in binge drinking sessions - should be imposed on drinkers “to encourage more responsible drinking” (Davies, 2008, p. 2)

Shiroma (1994) reported on successful American measures initiated by students and parents, recorded in research about risk taking by Hernandez, Rabow and Watts (1986). These included programmes to prevent drink/driving such as MADD (Mothers against Drink Driving), SADD

(Students against Drink Driving) and ADDY (Alcohol, Drugs, Driving and You) (p.2) Other measures were added to these programmes such as official sobriety check - points, designated drivers and increasing penalties when caught. The solutions suggested at this time were to start driver education at a very early age and to impress and instill the consequences of drink driving on young adolescent minds, along with programmes of information about drug use (Shiroma, 1994, p. 2).

Bacon (1978) warned against having too many intervention strategies as these “can create ambiguities in the intervention context” and “produce a shotgun approach”. Instead it must be recognised that each situation differs and needs a separate approach where everyone concerned is “clear about what problems we are aiming to alleviate” (as cited in Millstein, Peterson & Nightingale, 1993, p. 267).

The treatment of alcoholism will depend on the theoretical model which is adopted. The moral model will work on ideas that alcoholism is a controllable moral weakness, while the medical model will treat the situation as a disease or illness. With the psychological model, the treatment will regard the problem as a measure in the alleviating of stress, anxiety or depression, while the genetic or hereditary model will assume that the problem had been inherited (Sigelman, Gurstell & Stewart, 1992) (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002, p. 478).

Kevin Rudd, Australia’s Prime Minister (2008), has published a radical plan to curb the incidence of binge drinking in Australian cities. The model for this plan is alternative to those mentioned above. It relies on fear tactics to “scare the living daylights” out of the binge drinking adolescents. The proposed advertising plan will use a “graphic Grim Reaper (a figure of death) advertising plan“ to warn teenagers against the dangers and health risks of “excessive alcohol consumption”.

There will also be “cooperative strategies with sports’ clubs to curb the drinking habits of young men, by implementing codes of conduct and responsible drinking behaviours for players, officials and members”. Early intervention, diversion and identification programmes will also ” target the

individual adolescents in need of behaviour modification and change and provide assistance for parents, police, and local communities”. It is mooted also that “opening hours, now up to 3am, for venues, selling alcohol will be reduced” (as cited in Davis, 2008, p. 1).

Perhaps, for the participants in this research, the moral model will prove to serve them best. The Rudd initiatives are best matched to the psychological model. It is obvious though, that much needs to be done regarding education to prevent the acceptance and influence of alcohol and other substances into adolescent lives.

This study will highlight some of the curricula, which need to be designed and implemented for each senior grade group, and made part of the compulsory school programme.

2.18.10 Media Influences

The report of the Joint Select Committee on Video Materials (1999) defined pornography as “video material, which is predominantly sexually explicit, and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal” (Graham, 1999, p. 1). The criticisms in the report focus on the facts that pornography “objectifies” (Category 1), and “commodifies” (Category 11) women to satisfy males or to arouse sexual desires in target audiences (Graham, 1999, p. 2). Senator Zakharov’s criticisms were grounded in her practice as a counselling psychologist when she emphasized that viewing X-Rated videos does not reliably predict human behaviour or necessarily show a causal link or correlation between the videos and committing violent or criminal acts. Many causes, such as parental attitudes to violence or viewing violence at home, economic status, school retention or fundamentalist religious attitudes, have to be considered also, before causality can be established (Graham, 1999, p. 4).

Past researchers of violent pornography (Brannigan, 1987; Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981; Donnerstein et al., 1987; Fisher & Greiner, 1994) have found many problems associated with their studies. These include multiple and contradictory interpretations of their findings, the possibility of mediating variables, such as the reaction of the victims in the films and the validity of

the experiments. An emerging genre of research attempts to correct these issues by studying the effects of pornography on its users within natural environments. Some of the researchers (Davies, 1997; Padgett et al., 1989) now use self-nominated pornography users in order to understand how this genre functions in everyday life. A key issue in the previous studies (Donnerstein et al., 1987) has been the failure of researchers to “to arrive at a suitable operational definition of media violence, or a suitable definition of what constitutes aggressive behaviour” (as cited in McKee, 2005, p. 1). According to Gossett and Byrne (2002) researchers classify certain depicted acts of violence, aggression and coercion in a variety of ways (as cited in McKee, 2005, p. 1). Consensual sex as suggested by Baron, (1987) should not be counted as violence, even if it contains physically aggressive or sadomasochistic practices, but this is only a minority view (Barron & Kimme, 2000; Dietz & Sears, 1988; Palys, 1986). Other authors (Cowan et al., 1988; Monk-Turner & Burrell, 1999) use a mixture of approaches. McKee (2005) uses Barron’s understandings from Donnerstein et al. 1987, to explain that violent pornography must have the goal of harm or injury to another (as cited in McKee, 2005, p. 2). In pornography that “objectifies” women [Category 1], women are merely “things” and this type sanctions threatening, beating, raping, and even torturing, maiming and killing women.

In nonviolent, yet degrading pornography, [Category 11], women are frequently presented as being eager for sexual experience of any kind and ever ready for any opportunity for sexual activity. These videos mainly present women involved in group sex scenes, engaging in diverse sexual activity, the aim being solely to arouse sexual desires in a target audience. Pornography with fully consenting adults engaged in a heterosexual activity (Category 111) has the sole purpose of again arousing sexual desires in its viewers and has voyeuristic characteristics in that in all cultures view sexual intercourse as in the domain of personal sexual privacy, but this presents it in the public domain (as cited in McKee, 2005, p. 2).

Zillman and Bryant (1984) found in their research on pornography that it caused both males and females to trivialize rape, increased male callousness and in general to form beliefs that were not respectful to the opposite or same

sex (as cited in McKee, 2005, p. 6). The same authors also claimed that there was a reduction in both males' and females' desire to have children, comparisons of pornographic models with their own partners and "sex at large (seeming) to be the end result" (as cited in McKee, 2005, p. 7). Later researchers refuted these claims. Donnerstein, Linz and Penrod, quoted by Carol (1994), criticized the methodology and personal prejudices and biases of Zillman and Bryant (as cited in McKee, 2005, p. 7).

Other researchers contend that the media do have a strong influence. There is a strong association existing between adolescents' social attitudes and behaviours and their exposure to rock music videos (Borman & Schneider, 1998, p. 53). Girls who are exposed to music videos are more permissive about premarital sex than those not exposed. Film stars, television characters and fashion models become the role models, rather than real life people (Borman & Schneider, 1998, p. 53). A Canadian report on the effect of television violence on children aged twelve to seventeen, disclosed that even though this age group is capable of high levels of abstract thought and reasoning, the students rarely put these abilities into use at home. They develop preference for media which revolves around their interests, namely independence, sex and romance. Their preferences then are for music videos, horror movies (for boys particularly) and pornographic videos, all of which usually deal with their interest topics in a negative way (as cited in Josephson, 1995, p. 3). The media also reinforces the concept of male domination with more male characters and activities which are strongly gender-neutral (Vialle et al., 2000, p. 150).

It, therefore, appears to be very difficult to actually carry out experiments on the issue of pornography and its effects successfully. It is also difficult to define adequately the categories within this type of activity. The adolescents in this study will disclose whether pornography is an issue in any part of their lives, perhaps indicative of a desensitizing of societal values.

2.19 Previous Tasmanian Risk Taking Study

A previous study (Abbott-Chapman/Denholm, 2001) on the topic of student adolescent risk taking had been undertaken in Hobart, the capital city of

Tasmania with 952 students from Year 11 and 12, (male and female) aged fifteen to nineteen years, from a variety of public and private schools in the city area, including some based on religious values. These authors had identified twenty-six risk-taking activities from high risk (for example drink-driving) to low risk (for example shop lifting), for their focus groups and questionnaire survey participants. One factor omitted in this former study was the effect of all the negative risk taking activities on the health of the participants.

This study found that there was a widespread engagement by adolescents in risky activities involving smoking, alcohol, drink driving, drug use and unsafe sexual activity. The most serious activities were the “hard drug” use and sharing needles. Drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes were common to the whole group and the young people revealed that they always felt under surveillance by all adults, even parents and additionally, the media as the reports from this latter source were always negative. Parents regarded many activities unsafe, even walking around streets. Shop-lifting was condemned, but was done “for a dare or a joke”. Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol was considered to be “adult” and “social”. Legal opinions about the activities were underplayed, but parents’ opinions carried more weight.

Having future goals was important and assisted students to avoid dangerous risks. Risks were categorized as either good or bad and life itself was considered a “risk”. Worries about the future made students take risks, but moral judgements and beliefs were mentioned to some degree as deterrents to risk taking. There was more peer pressure to drink and to smoke in public schools, whereas religious values affected choices in the religion based schools. Religiosity is highly correlated with an activity being “right” or “wrong” and “legal” or “illegal”. Belonging to a church, school and/or community group of shared values was needed.

Public schools still had discussions about right and wrong especially about resisting peer pressure and “fun” and “excitement” activities. Percentages for several of the risk taking activities varied with drinking alcohol, binge drinking and smoking marijuana very high (average 70 percent). Heroin use

was low at less than 2 percent. Unsafe sexual activity averaged 31.5 percent while binge drinking at age sixteen or under was 56 percent. Speeding was as high at 39.6 percent, with drink-driving much lower at 13.2 percent. The viewing of X-Rated videos was very high at 61.9 percent.

The adolescents tended to distance themselves from all these activities and no mention of health concerns were investigated in this survey. Risk was defined as being natural and endemic to the human condition, an outcome of free choice.

This research will determine whether fear and prohibition will prevent risk taking, or whether change can occur through positive learning experiences and supportive conditions, adolescents' attitudes and activities. Those working with adolescents will have the information needed to examine their own values and views of the world.

2.20 Female Background

Late modern adolescence, according to Driscoll, (2002) is not only a physiological and psychosocial periodisation, it also shows the separation of certain behaviours, such as lifestyles, interests and forms of cultural reproduction. Driscoll also contends that adolescence is entirely a cultural phenomenon and that the history of the emergence of feminine adolescence intersects with the new forms of cultural production. Feminist discussions of girls rarely engage with feminine adolescence without constructing girls as opposed to, or otherwise defining the mature, independent woman as a feminist object (Driscoll, 2002, p. 115). Driscoll continues with the assertion that feminine adolescence is (related) to capitalist modernity and that changes to girlhood...have accompanied major changes to capitalist cultures (Driscoll, 2002, p. 115).

Feminist researchers, (Griffiths ,1995; Hey, 1997) then, tend to note that being female produces the trend to see women in subordinate positions and not in the material or value they produce, or even will produce in the future, but rather in their value for society (as wives and mothers) (as cited in Driscoll, 2002, p. 115). However, other research has ascertained that young women are

very active in shaping and constructing their own, quite often unique responses and strategies, to what can be very severe restrictions and demands on their lives (Griffiths, 1995, p. 127). Home responsibilities and night curfews are some of the restrictions placed on females and their lifestyles (Griffin, 1985a; Griffiths 1984; Lees 1986)(as cited in Griffiths, 1995, p. 134). Arnot (1982) contended that the “feminine is always on display”, with females constructing attitudes with “the company they keep” and are “as moral agents”. According to Gilligan (1982), this is all leading to the non-voicing of self in adolescence (as cited in Hey, 1997, p. 10). Hey continues with the added revelation that feminine relationships emphasise the essential private and intimate nature of women’s lives, also indicated by other researchers (Johnson & Aries 1983 ; O’Connor 1992), (as cited in Hey, 1997, p. 10).

Young women tend to keep these feminine friendships on a frequent basis even when interested in “going out with boy friends” (Griffiths, 1995, p. 161). Bloustein’s study, in the mid 1990s, of ten Adelaide (South Australian) girls who told their “stories” on videos, found that each girl struggled to establish a vital sense of uniqueness and difference whilst grounding her personal view of the world within her already established social environment (Bloustein, 2003, p. 14). There was a wide variety of nationalities and living situations for the girls, from homes with biological parents, single parents, foster homes (state wards), stepparents, with siblings from blended families and those in independent living. Each participant needed to be seen in the centre of her own social network. Conformity and distinction were continually opposing forces, as were involvement and distancing. In this complicated nexus, each girl was trying to find the “real me” and the “me” embedded in a web of cultural understandings and constraints (Bloustein, 2003, p. 14).

2.21 Research Contributions

At this stage of the study into female adolescence and risk taking, the researcher reflected upon the findings to consider which aspects were significant for her study and which would have little credibility for the final data analysis. Of prime interest was the data on the process of adolescence itself and whether the female participants confirmed that it was a traumatic

time in their lives, filled with “storm and stress”, turmoil and confusion or whether they appeared as confident young women, capable of managing this stage of their human development with a sense of self identity, as was one of the aims of the study. The attitudes and the influence of adults in the young females’ lives provided another link with the literature where parental and other adult attitudes about young people were not always seen in a complementary light.

It was significant to see if the participants viewed themselves as young women, passing through a male process which originated with the demise of male child labour during the industrial revolution. Did these females see themselves in the stereotypical roles as portrayed through the media, or as part of a “time narrative” where adult attitudes viewed the process as being ends orientated with the improvement of mankind as the result? Additionally, was there a blurring of the feminine with masculine roles, with the women aiming for more than marriage and children and lives where they were independent, professionally trained, resilient and the “centre” of their own worlds.

The background knowledge from professionals such as psychologists, sociologists and education personnel was useful to view the young females from varying perspectives and contexts and to gauge their reaction to these professional views and to the social capital available to them. The risk taking literature was most significant for comparing the respondents’ reasons for their negative risk behaviours, their participation levels and the amount of information they held about the health implications of their activities and the strategies they employed to lessen their involvement in dangerous lifestyles.

2.22 Conclusion

In this chapter the general information about adolescence was followed by gender differences in risk taking. This has been followed by background research on risk taking and its causes. Each of the specific background perspectives such as psychology, sociology and education counselling were examined to determine the role that these disciplines played in adolescent’s lives. This was followed by detailed analyses of the effects of the risk taking

in this study and strategies for prevention. One Tasmanian study was analysed and provided useful findings for later comparison with the results of this research. A final section looked at the changes in the nature of females as they entered the twenty-first century. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will detail in full the methodology used to gather the data for this study and will provide the framework on which it all rests. Following this, Chapters 4 and 5, will disclose the Qualitative and Quantitative findings using the NVivo and SPSS computer programmes followed by Chapter 6 with the findings from an interviews with administrators, teachers and parents about adolescents. Chapter 7 contains a review of Australian and State policies on the risk activities in this study, while Chapter 8 will reflect on all the researchers' findings.

CHAPTER 3**METHODOLOGY****3.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes the procedures and methods used to undertake the purpose of this study about Female Adolescence and Risk Taking. At first the focus concentrated on the aims of the study and the techniques used to collect and analyse the data, with discussion regarding qualitative and quantitative methods. The participants in the study were described with reference to their contextual and socio-economic background. The limitations of the study and the ethical factors concluded the methodological aspects.

The methodology consisted of three varying forms of data collection. The first method involved the use of a detailed questionnaire sent to two hundred and nineteen adolescent females in a senior secondary school environment. The results from this survey were analysed using Five Research Objectives, derived from the Literature Review and yielded both qualitative and quantitative data from the use of NVivo and SPSS Computer Software Programmes.

The second method used a different group of individuals, namely School Administrators, Teachers and Parents in interviews to gauge real life reactions to adolescent lifestyle issues and negative risk taking activities. The responses from this survey were analysed using Five Themes, which had been developed from the interviews, and provided additional qualitative data. The third method turned to the policy makers at both the Australian national level and the State levels. Their policies, on the four aspects of negative risk taking risk in this study, namely alcohol and drug use and abuse, sexual activity and the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos were analysed by using again, the Five Research Objectives from the Literature Review, coupled with five

themes from the responses. This provided another collection of qualitative data.

3.1 Research Question and Objectives

This research was concerned with gaining insights into the lives of adolescents, particularly females. The overarching question at the core of thesis was defined as “What is the level of negative risk taking amongst female students in a Senior Secondary School environment?” The research was also interested in their thoughts, attitudes, viewpoints and feelings regarding their socio-economic backgrounds juxtaposed with their perceptions, participation rates and associated health implications, regarding the selected list of negative risk taking activities-alcohol and drug use and abuse and sexual activity including the viewing of X-Rated videos. Another concern for the researcher was to encourage more professional involvement, particularly in education, where curricula change addressing the key issues, needed to be implemented to bring about a reduction in negative risk taking activities and improved health outcomes.

The following Research Objectives had been formulated from the discussion of the main aspects of adolescent lives in the Literature Review. Recurring issues in this review focussed on the many factors, influences and expectations impinging, on adolescents in general, and females in particular. The immediate influences came in the form of parental control and sibling and peer group relationships. Later influences also included the contribution of teachers and members of the wider community. These factors operated jointly with the development of the adolescents’ “sense of self” on their journey from childhood to adulthood. Therefore, the following Research Objectives had been designed to investigate seven of the main concerns surrounding adolescence and risk taking activities.

- RO1. To investigate the concept of “self” in adolescent females, the adolescent females’ aspirations for the future and their risk taking attitudes.
- RO2. To determine the amount of personal control, evident in the adolescent females’ lives in their younger years and their attitudes regarding the law, legal restrictions and adult authority.
- RO3. To discover the amount of expectations placed on the adolescent females, by themselves, their families, their schools and their communities in their earlier years.
- RO4. To ascertain whether adolescent females are resilient to adversity in their lives.
- RO5. To analyse the need to “sensation seek” in the lives of adolescent girls and their perceptions of their risk taking activities.
- RO6. To examine the views of Adults with responsibility for teaching or caring for adolescents (For Chapter 6).
- RO7. (a) To examine the policies of Education Authorities in relation to the Risk Taking of Adolescents.
- (b) To examine the practicality of the policies in regard to economic, resource base, curricula and time considerations.
- (c) To consider the implications for teachers.
- (d) To consider their coherence, noting similarities and differences (For Chapter 7).

3.1.1 Elaboration of Research Objectives

In the Literature Review there was an emphasis on the negative aspects of adolescence. There were many references to the tendency for adolescents to experiment with negative risky activities including alcohol, drugs and sexual activity. This negativity also included the adverse influence of the relevant

peer group, the adolescent disregard for the law and authority and the conflict with, and estrangement from, parents. However, underlying all this research, there was also evidence of adolescents moving in a positive way, from dependence to independence, with many opportunities for realizing their highly motivated goals, relating more to parents and being resilient, following the traumas of life. With these contrasts in mind, the following objectives were formed to discover more insight about adolescence from the adolescent female questionnaire and the policy documents, two of the methodologies in this research.

RO1. *To investigate the concept of “self” in adolescent females, the adolescent females’ aspirations for the future and their risk taking attitudes.*

It was noted in the research by Erikson (1968) that the “self” or “I” emerges “with a parental figure during infancy”, but “it is only when the adolescent is able to select some and discard other...childhood identifications...that identity formation occurs”(as cited in Kroger, 1989, p. 15). Therefore, this research objective was included to gauge the level of “self” and “identity” which had been developed by the participants in this study and whether this had had any affective role in preventing their negative risky behaviour. It was also noted in the background research that college students were “more cautious” and “more responsible” (Shiroma, 1994, pp. 6-7). Therefore this objective was also included to judge whether any aspirations held by this college age group of sixteen to nineteen year olds were diminished in any way, or whether their hopes for successful lives were impeded by risky lifestyles.

The literature research also provided a great deal of information regarding the prevalence of risk taking behaviours (Skinner 2003; Foundation of Alcohol, & Drug Information, 2003). This objective would also disclose whether these

adolescent women had been given sufficient background knowledge about risk taking in general, or whether they were cognisant of the inherent dangers of their negative risk activities and engaged in them without regard to any information about their risks.

RO2. *To determine the amount of personal control, evident in the adolescent females' lives in their younger years and their attitudes regarding the law, legal restrictions and adult authority.*

There were findings from the literature search about the effect of control and relationships with parents in the women's lives. Evidence from similar samples (Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck & Duckett 1996; Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986) indicated, "that a process of behavioural and emotional distancing occurs" between the adolescents and their parents" (Lerner & Sternberg, 2004, p. 309).

The statement by Farrow (1985) that risky driving was cited more often than other traffic violations prompted this question about the attitudes, adolescents in general and young women in particular, have towards the laws in this country and to the legal system overall. Walde, (1982) commented that adolescents trade off risks against benefits, which may apply to the negation of the consequences of the legal systems (as cited in Yates, 1992, p. 23).

Whilst parental attitudes will be under scrutiny in Objective 2, the adolescents' attitudes to other adults and their control on their lives also became a factor in this section. These adults may have included teachers or other members of the community, or those they may have met in the business or financial aspects of their lives.

RO3. *To discover the amount of expectations placed on the adolescent females, by themselves, their families, their schools and their communities in their earlier years.*

The expectations placed upon the young women in their formative years became important, as were their attitudes to their parents and to authority in general. The reflections of researchers such as Bukatko & Daehler, (2004) questioned the concept of whether families are havens for nurturing the child's growth and development given the constant restructuring of families, with these changes reflecting social, economic and historical trends, such as the loss of the extended family (Bukatko & Daehler, 2004, p. 498).

Explanations in the literature regarded social capital as being valuable, because it is "an important resource for individuals...(affecting) their ability to act and to perceive a quality of life" (Putman, 2000, p. 319). These values then, also became the catalyst for this question to gauge the amount of expectation and influence the adolescent girls received from their school experiences and those in the wider community.

RO4. *To ascertain whether adolescent females are resilient to adversity in their lives.*

Lipton's (1994) commented that all youth has innate resilience, so this was the stimulus for this question in the survey (as cited in Bernard, 1997, p. 1). The literature research indicated that, for some, adolescence could be a time of "storm and stress" (Hall, 1904). Again, because of all the negative risk taking engaged in by adolescents, this was included to consider the difficulties in the participants' lives and to compare the traumas in the females' lives with their resilience capabilities.

RO5. *To analyse the need to “sensation seek” in the lives of adolescent girls and their perceptions of their risk taking activities.*

Shiroma (1994) reported on Arnett’s (1989) findings about the inbuilt tendency of adolescents to “sensation seek” and the need for novel, varying and complex situations (Shiroma, 1994, p. 2). These aspects, along with the “sensation seeking”, became an important aspect of the study to ascertain whether this aspect was a part of the females’ characteristics, within their risk taking activities.

RO6. *To examine the views of Adults with responsibility for teaching or caring for adolescents (For Chapter 6).*

It was considered necessary to survey key adults who spend much time caring for adolescents or working with them in school situations. The role of parents is being undermined by the changes in family life and in society generally, so it was important to discover the attitudes and strategies they had towards adolescence. School administrators and teachers have the education and care of students each school day and need to cater for their understanding of the dangers of negative risk taking in their curricula and in their strategies for support.

RO7 (a) *To examine the policies of Education Authorities in relation to the Risk Taking of Adolescents.*

(b) *To examine the practicality of the policies in regard to economic, resource base, curricula and time considerations.*

(c) *To consider the implications for teachers.*

(d) *To consider their coherence, noting similarities and differences (For Chapter 7).*

All of these policies were advantageous in discovering the range of considerations for curricula content and change to meet the demands of

educators, students and parents. Funding was a key component of the national programmes and was a crucial component in the analysis of the documents.

3.2 Research Design and Methods

The research methodologies used for this thesis consisted of a mixed-methods survey design. The first method consisted of the questionnaire, with the second method being interviews with some Administrators, Teachers and Parents, working or living with adolescents. The third method involved the analysis of Australian and Tasmanian policy documents regarding adolescent alcohol and drug use and abuse and sexual activity. It was considered necessary to have this variety of methods to give a broader picture of the female experience and risk taking activities. There would not only be the viewpoints from the participants' perspectives of their adolescent lives, but a comparative view from adults with a close knowledge of their lifestyles, juxtaposed with the official position of the national and state governments.

3.2.1 Research Sites and Participants

The site for the questionnaire was a Senior Secondary College in Tasmania where the participants came from the females aged sixteen to nineteen in the Grade 11 class. The adults in the interview section came from the three main cities of Tasmania, namely Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. The policy documents were obtained electronically from each state and the national policy centres.

3.3 Instrumentation

3.3.1 Questionnaire

A postal questionnaire sent to female adolescents formed the basis of the study and from this both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained. It was necessary to obtain the responses from a sample of female adolescents, so

that their perspectives on a wide range of topics, including risk taking, both positive and negative, could be analysed and a new understanding gained about the process of adolescence. This new knowledge was considered to be of particular value to parents, educators and other professionals interested in the training and care of children and adolescents.

3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews were held with key administrators, teachers and parents and were used to obtain their views on topics related to the study. The administrators/teachers/parents' interviews provided a sense of "reality" to the study, using the current responses of key education professionals, as well as parents involved with adolescents. From this advice, new strategies could be merged with those already known, to provide better protection from the dangers of negative risk taking. The lifestyles of young adolescents were of great concern to those working closely with them, so this input was very useful for their future planning.

3.3.3 Australian and State Risk Taking Policies

An analysis based on the first Five Objectives for this study followed the two surveys. This analysis was concerned with the Australian Government and State Policies, about the four main areas into which this study could be categorised, namely alcohol and drug use and abuse, sexual activity and the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos.

It was these three areas which were dominant in the literature review at the beginning of the research. The findings from this analysis were very useful to juxtapose against the revelations of the former Tasmanian study. From these policy comparisons, the similarities and differences between the Australian states were ascertained to develop new policy directives, curricula content and

legal approaches to curb the occurrence of risk behaviours amongst adolescents.

3.4 Procedures

3.4.1 Ethics

Approval for this study was given by the Ethics Department of the University of Tasmania (April 1999), (Appendix 1) and by the Tasmanian Department of Education (September 2001), (Appendix 2) The only provision, which had to be provided by the researcher, was to alert the College Counsellors about the study and to enlist their support, if the female students had any difficulties with the questionnaires and their subsequent revelations.

3.4.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

“Qualitative researchers are interested in answering the question “Why?” and are not prepared to simply accept the quantitative answers”. That is not to suggest that the quantitative data were not important. It is just “not enough on its own...[and] when placed alongside qualitative evidence, quantitative evidence is both clear and powerful” (McBride & Schostak, 2007, p. 1). There was much debate about the advantages of using questionnaires and the relevant value of qualitative versus quantitative data, all of which were addressed in subsequent sections.

As with all sociological research, the researcher needed to investigate the conduct of others and “to comprehend and explain why both types of actors, [researchers and participants] and the social processes, are as they are” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 42). Researchers, therefore, could feel justified with the need to explore many topics. “Good qualitative research requires the topic being studied” and researchers must not “assume that it does not need some kind of analysis” (Searle, 1999, p. 192). It was interesting that “There is

not one correct method. One has to find a way of working which is appropriate” (Searle, 1999, p. 93). Ascertaining, discerning and analyzing the character of female risk taking, formed the topic chosen for this study and for this purpose a postal questionnaire, the set of questions for administrators/teachers/parents and the national and state policies on risk taking were used to gain new insights.

The aim of qualitative data gathering was to obtain a complete and descriptive description of the phenomenon being studied, whereas quantitative methods tended to classify features and construct models with numbers, which attempted to explain what was being observed, but both methods “need each other more often than not ” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1). This was another dimension to the arguments against each of these types of research. This concerned the increased necessity to consider the ‘ontological [concepts of reality or subjective bases]’ and “epistemological [limits of knowledge or objective bases]” (Olsen, 1995, p. 1). Considering the subjectivity of the qualitative method, researchers and educators alike have to be more circumspect about their findings, because their knowledge is considered to be “soft”, whereas quantified methods can prove to be more powerful, or “hard”, even though they hide much background understanding about people (McBride & Schostak, 2007, p. 2).

One positive feature of qualitative research assures participants that any rare information receives the same amount of attention as more frequent responses and the number of categories of information is infinite, rather than finite, as is often necessary with quantitative research. Exceptions, therefore, are not lost in the desire for data control, as in the chi-squared test where researchers often find that categories have to be collapsed into one group, resulting in a loss of data richness. These exceptions should be examined fully as a test of the

“validity” of the research and the conclusions which are made (Searle, 1999, p. 194).

McBride and Schostak (2007) also contended that quantitative research does not understand the complexities of life and that qualitative research emerges within natural settings, illuminating and analysing social situations and the complexities of life and living and not in laboratory based or ‘artificial settings’ (p. 2). These authors also put forward the argument for more “fuzzy” types of data gained from qualitative research, because quantitative data can be viewed as more “idealized” (p. 2). This is countered by the observation by Hammersley (1991) that qualitative researchers often analyse data in ways, which can be alien to the respondents (as cited in McBride & Schostak, 2007, p. 3). This being so, it is important to note that by the involvement of the subjects of research, qualitative researchers are building their theories from the foundation of their own experiences or practices (McBride & Schostak, 2007, p. 2). Qualitative research is noted for placing the researcher and the subject into the context of the situation and by doing this, the aim is to understand each respondent and to involve each one as an active participant in the process (Olsen, 1995, p. 3).

On the negative side, this subjectivity can result in the researcher becoming “immersed in the subject matter”, rather than staying objectively separated from the information (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 40). Olsen confronts the consequence of this subjectivity, i.e. bias, by contending that qualitative researchers “recognize and acknowledge it” by documenting these biases and by “striving to rise above them” whereas objective researchers try to eliminate this factor (Olsen, 1995, p. 3).

A state of complete objectivity, is impossible for any and all researchers “who are, after all, human beings” (Olsen, 1995, p. 3). MacIntyre (1998) adds

another dimension to this debate by clarifying the points that the history of the traditional methods and the history and character of the individual researcher must also be taken into account, along with the generalizations and transferability of the research findings (as cited in McBride & Schostak, 2007, p. 2). The lack of permission for this researcher to discuss the questionnaire with the females, lessened the impact of the researcher's history on the participants, as her mature age and disciplined background may have been confronting to the participants. By comparing these two approaches to data analysis, it was apparent that they are two discrete methods and that they are not in opposition to each other, but have a complementary status one to the other.

3.4.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires which are self-completion "are very popular with researchers as they are so easy to administer" (Moore, 2000, p. 108). They have many advantages with two important aspects such as ensuring respect and confidentiality for the respondents. There must be assurances though, that "informed consent" has been obtained as "an important safeguard" for the participants and that there has been no element of "deception, invasion of privacy and participants' rights" (Graziano & Rankin, 2000, p. 66). Anonymity can be assured by self administering the surveys face to face, with individuals privately, or in a group situation, with the answers being collected in sealed envelopes. This creates the most anonymity as the researchers can oversee that there is no contact between them and the participants, but failing the availability of (a face to face situation) the next best method is to use "the mail survey" (Bradburn, Sudman & Wansink, 2004, p. 347). Another author agreed that anonymity is useful as "People may be more willing to be truthful, because anonymity is all but guaranteed" (Salkind, 1997, p. 149). Also added was the information that a questionnaire does not make unnecessary demands

on respondents and the “objectivity of the data makes it easier to share with other researchers” (Salkind, 1997, p. 149).

There was another advantage that “survey and questionnaire design enables typically larger target populations to be identified, leading to a greater chance of increasing typical representation [and depth] “(Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 105). Questionnaires also allow every researcher “to access a wider range of behaviours or phenomena that cannot be studied in a typically naturalistic, observational setting” (Marczyk, De Matteo & Festinger, 2005, p. 154). Authors also contended that because questionnaires focus on activities, interests and opinions of the participants and reflect psychographic or individual differences, they could predict behaviour and thinking, “not [just] demographics” (Bradburn et al., 2004, p. 347). All the participants’ activities are considered to be very important and to “require attention to detail” (Wiersma, 2000, p. 167). Questionnaires are more suitable for “non contentious, relatively straightforward topics”, but “are not good for exploring complex issues or concepts which are hard to define in society today “as the “concept of [research] means so many different things to different people” (Moore, 2000, p. 111). Researchers also suggested that questions should at least be “answerable” and that this basic concept “should not be overlooked” (Marczyk, De Matteo & Festinger, 2005, p. 8).

Attitudes and ways of thinking about specific opinions, beliefs or normative behaviour to do with “religion or [that which is] moral and proper” can be dealt with in questionnaires (Bradburn et al., 2004, pp. 347-348). Foddy (1993) warned that many factors are important to consider when asking these types of questions (Foddy, 1993, p. 2). Salkind advised, “Early questions should [be used] to warm up the respondent” (p. 152).

Wiersma also suggested that researchers only use single items included in each question (Wiersma, 2000, p. 169). Burns added that it is better not to ask “for more than one piece of information per question” (Burns, 1994, p. 355). Factual questions, such as questions about age, whilst worthwhile in obtaining useful socio-economic information, can have problems in that “factual questions sometimes elicit invalid answers” (Foddy, 1993, p. 2).

Closed questions also have difficulties, because they prompt more “yes”, “no” answers (Foddy, 1993, p. 59). These types of questions “reflect and impose the researchers’ values and priorities onto respondents and assume that sociologists know all the possible answers and that any alternatives...are unimportant” (McNeill & Chapman, 2005, p. 37). Closed questions are better for obtaining statistics (McNeill & Chapman, 2005, p. 37). Open-ended questions are best, “as they have no restrictions, desired content or manner of reply and provide a richness and intensity of response” (Burns, 1994, p. 349). Probing questions, such as solely “Why?” questions, need to be asked “in a correct manner” with “In what way?” (Bradburn et al., 2004, p. 319). When using scales for ranking opinions, such as Poor to Excellent, list only five to six variables. Likewise, with factual questions such as, “Which languages do you speak?” only provide a small selection of five to six as multiple choices otherwise the respondents could create too many combinations (Burns, 1994, p. 350). Moore (2000) urged researchers to not “have odd numbers of items on a rating scale” (p. 111).

It has also been noted that “recalling past behaviour [can lead] to a memory error” (Bradburn et al., 2004, p. 363). Cannell et al. (1981) explained that this is caused where the questions and information being sought have to have “salience” and also the “decay of memory” and “elapsed time” will all impact on the salience of the response, because of all the “events to remember” (as cited in Foddy, 1993, p. 93).

There is another tendency to answer questions in the same way regardless of context when presented with a scale such as “Yes”, “No”, “Often” (Bradburn et al., 2004, p. 361). This practice, combined with “long lists of responses”, affects the respondent’s answers” (Foddy, 1993, p. 59). It has to be realized “that questions [in a survey have] multi-layered functions” (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002, p. 102). Researchers should “acknowledge that in a given survey, the questionnaire has not provided all the answers and that it has played a part in generating new avenues for research” (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002, p. 128). For this researcher, the use of a questionnaire became the most suitable methodology for the first and major part of this study, not only because of its positive characteristics, but also because of the anonymity and privacy it afforded the respondents and the researcher.

3.4.4 Adolescent Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire was divided into four parts:

PART A

This part had the aim of gaining personal data, with socio-economic and demographic information about the participants’ age, locality, family, parents’ education, clubs and societies and their importance, religious beliefs and church attendance.

PART B

This part contained questions analysing the participants’ early childhood, to ascertain their attitudes to their childhood and school experiences, interests, aspirations, influences and the expectations placed on them.

PART C

This part was designed to gauge the respondents’ sense of self with questions about their self descriptions, aspirations, goal success, relationships with

parents, reactions to controls in their lives and their experiences with traumas and their resilience levels.

PART D

This part concentrated on their attitudes to risk taking and their perception and participation rates. The Likert Scale method was used here to determine the participants' attitudes. These scales have advantages and disadvantages, but their reliability, according to Oppenheim (1966) tends to be higher than other types of scale measures, providing more precise information, and actually, just dividing people "into a number of broad groups" (p. 121). (This study's Questionnaire appears as Appendix 3).

Questions 1 and 2 were concerned with the respondents' age group, between sixteen and nineteen years and their location in either a town or country area. Questions 3 to 5 sought out the socio-economic information about their family composition, with "In what type of family did you grow up?" followed by tick boxes with set data to answer. This was followed with requests for the number of parents and their highest educational levels. A question on the females' aspirations for further education from Grade 11 onwards to Grade 12, University, Technical or other training came next with "How far do you want to go with your educational training?" followed by tick boxes with options. This question about the parent's educational levels was aimed at not only discovering the females' aspirations, but to see whether their aims were equivalent to their parents or were higher.

The next block of four questions had two questions, 6 and 7, which were specifically aimed at gaining knowledge about their outside school and community interests. These included sporting, musical, religious, hobby, service or other educational interests and the importance the females attached to them with "How important are these to you?" with a range of "Not very

important” to “Very important”. The next two questions 8 and 9 were very focused on their religious affiliations and the frequency of attendance at a church or other worship services with “Do you have any religious beliefs?” and tick boxes with a “Yes” to “Use To” range.

From Question 10 to Question 13, the emphasis was on the participants’ early childhood, their levels of happiness with “Was your childhood happy?” with tick boxes for Yes and No and spaces to explain, “Why did you answer as you did?” The significant issues investigated in this section included the females’ parental influences, the levels of authority their parents had and the parental expectations placed on the girls when younger. Question 14 was solely about the females’ attitudes to their early education, compared with their experiences at the Senior Secondary College where this survey was instigated. Question 15 was of paramount importance as it gauged the influence of the peer group on the females’ lives with. “What influence did your peer group have on you in your childhood?” The influence of the peer group was emphasised very strongly in the literature review.

The next Question, number 16, turned the focus onto other “influential” and “significant others” the respondents had had in their lives, while Question 17 inquired about their future aspirations, when younger. From Question 18 to 20 the emphasis returned to the girls’ sense of identity with questions about their personal descriptions, their present goals and the achievement rate of these goals with questions such as “How would you describe yourself as a person?” with space to write lists of words or sentences. In Questions 21 to 26 parental influences and other controls in their adolescent lives became the focus, along with their reactions to all of these controls.

Question 27 focused solely on their traumatic experiences, to assess their coping and resilience factors. Questions 28 to 30 were entirely devoted to the

females' attitudes to risks, their perceptions of risk, (a Likert Scale 1-8) their participation levels (a Likert Scale 1-4) and reaction to the law and legal implications. To supplement this section Questions 31 and 32 sought information about risk reasons and responsibility levels with "To what extent do you feel responsible for what happens to you in your life?" with "When deciding to do something risky or dangerous do you think about whether it is legal or illegal? Please explain why?" The final Question, number 33, asked the respondents to write more information on adolescence and what it meant to be a teenager in the society at the time of the survey. All these sections and questions are summarized in the tables below:

Table3.1 *Questionnaire Structure*

Question Number	Information Sought	Student Requirement	Purpose
	Part A Personal Data		
1-2	Age Location	Tick Boxes	Suitability for study Categories Town/Country
3-4	Family Composition Educational Levels Parents	List Numbers List Levels	Present Situation Parents/Siblings
5	Aspirations of Students	List Educ. Levels Write Aspirations	Level Education Motivation
6-9	Sport, Hobbies, Religion Community Activities Levels of Importance	Tick Activity/ Importance Boxes Tick Religion Boxes	Social Capital Exposure to Community

Question Number	Information Sought	Student Requirement	Purpose
	Part B Early Childhood		
10-13	Early Childhood Evaluation	Tick Childhood Boxes Write Qualifying Reasons	Early Years' Background
14 15	School /College Evaluation Peer Group Influences	Tick School Responses Write Qualifying Responses	Variations in Attitudes
16 -17	Significant Others Family /School/Community Expectations	Write Statements	Social Capital Exposure/Influence

Question Number	Information Sought	Student Requirement	Purpose
	Part C Self Concept		
	Personal Details Goals/Aspirations/Future	Write Statements	Goal setting
18-26	Relationships Parents Adolescents Degree Authority/ Control Parents	Write Statements	Changes in Relationships
27	Degree Traumas Coping Strategies	Tick Boxes Write Statements	Resilience Factors

Question Number	Information Sought	Student Requirement	Purpose
	Part D Risk Perception Risk Participation		
28-30	Reasons for Risks Responsibility Levels	Write Statements	Casual/Preventative
31	Teenagers' Treatment	Write Statements	Future Changes Youth
32 -33	Risks Taken Risk Perception Risk Participation	Explain Previous Risks Complete Likert Scales	Levels of Risks

3.4.5 Adolescent Questionnaire Elaboration

The questionnaire used in this study had many features, which matched the positive aspects of questionnaires, as a research method. It was a mail survey suitable for a moderately sized group, the total number sent being two hundred and nineteen. It was not to be part of a longitudinal study, so there would be no way of knowing whether the attitudes and opinions of the females would change over time, except by media reports and any further studies of the same type. It was not considered necessary at the time this questionnaire was used, to provide background information about the risk taking activities being studied, as it may have influenced their responses. It

was their attitudes and experiences, at the time of their recent or current participation levels, which were under analysis.

The questions were focused and were graded, from the general socio-demographic type, to specific questions regarding the risk taking activities and the females' participation in them. Whilst closed questions began the questionnaire and were common in Section A, only once, in Question 8, was a "Yes" or "No" response an option from a set of four options. In the other seven questions, suggested choices of answers from set lists were required in the correct box e.g. Locality - (a) Town (b) Country. The first four questions focused on the participants' ages, locality, numbers of parents and siblings in the family, birth order and education levels of the parents with choices of answers available from sets of responses. These were mainly for gaining statistical information on the females' socio-demographic background, but did also yield some qualitative background as inferences could also be made from each question e.g. Were the mothers better educated than the fathers?

The next four questions were also closed with choices of answers provided from tick boxes about the participants' levels of education and training, their club/society membership, and the importance attached to them, religion and church attendance. Question 5, about the levels of educational aspirations, was the only one in this group of eight where a "Why?" question was asked seeking the participant's reasons for aspiring to certain levels of education, again for qualitative information. This would have been better with a "softer" less accusative approach, such as "How did you come to this decision?" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 169)

In the next section about the participant's early childhood, Questions ten to fourteen were a combination of closed and open. More appropriate "Why?" type questions were asked to qualify the reasons for answering set questions

about their childhood levels of happiness with, “Why did you answer as you did?”, parental influences and authority, “How was this shown?” and school enjoyment, “Explain why you have answered as you did?”. Question thirteen on parental expectations did not have any closed components and answers were completely open. Questions fifteen to seventeen in Section B were directed at the participants’ early childhood experiences and consequently were open and focused on peer group influence, significant others and the participants’ future expectations.

In Part C of the Questionnaire the emphasis was on the participants’ sense of self, their future goals and parental relationships. All the questions from eighteen to twenty-six were open with only one “Why?” type question about the participants’ predictions of the success or otherwise of their goals, but with better wording, such as, “Why do you think this?” Question twenty-seven reverted to a mixture of both closed and open responses about the amount of trauma in the participants’ lives. Questions in this case could have statistical data and the participants’ personal answers.

In Part D, the emphasis was on risk perceptions with Questions twenty-eight to thirty-one, querying risk taking, and the participants’ reasons for choices of risky behaviours, therefore, requiring open questions. An open question was also needed for Question number thirty-two about teenagers’ treatment in today’s society, to allow for personal comments to be expressed. The Likert Scales for risk participation in Question thirty-two caused some students to choose the option of answering Scale 8, “Don’t Know”, when asked to disclose participation levels either, as a way of transferring a lack of knowledge, or by avoiding involvement or detection as a participant. There were more choices, eight, on the perception scale than recommended by the theory, but the level of seriousness for each risk needed more variables than the suggested ranking of “five to six” (Burns, 1994, p. 350).

It was also recommended that researchers not “have odd numbers of items on a ranking scale, so the number 8 matched this suggestion (Moore, 2000, p. 14). The practice of using “Don’t Know” was minimal and therefore the use of the Likert Scales proved to be very successful for obtaining the data necessary, with no problem encountered in question thirty- three about risk participation, with only four rankings (1-4). In some cases, as with heroin use, there may be evidence that over or under reporting had taken place, but there was no method of proving this, except that the numbers were suitably very low. With most questions, there was little need to under or over estimate their answers.

There were questions about the females’ past experiences, but as the participants were still young, there was no evidence of a “decay of memory” or forgetfulness. There was no evidence of the “priming” (preparing the participants to answer in a particular way) of the participants with “risk” type questions or information appearing earlier in the questionnaire. Although the questions about risk taking were very specific, there was no evidence that these had embarrassed the females as some of the risk questions may have been seen as being “delicate and personal...about illicit activities” (Weirisma, 2000, p. 169). The use of the Likert Scale reduced the level of comment necessary about these activities. The use of the personal pronouns “you” and “your” was noticeable in many questions and these prompted more personal, positive responses. With only minor criticisms, the questionnaire proved to be very suitable for the research undertaken.

Each of the questions had had a basis in the literature review, so it was not considered necessary to run a trial of the questionnaire. Instead each potential respondent was given an opportunity to refuse to participate in the survey or to ask relevant questions about its contents. Only one student refused and one parent needed further information regarding the purpose of this project.

Therefore the original questionnaire was posted to the designated audience without further alterations or additions. There were no students who approached the researcher with the explanations clearly stated that it was an anonymous survey (See Appendix 3).

3.5 Procedures for Data Collection

A letter indicating the arrival of the questionnaire was sent to each designated respondent one week prior to the posting of the questionnaire, to allow for questions, explanations or refusals about participation. These potential respondents were advised that there could be no engagement with the researcher, about the study, in the daily course of the College programme.

Each questionnaire was anonymous with no identification of the participant indicated on the survey. As each completed questionnaire was received, a numerical identification was recorded, just for the purpose of the coding programmes. From the participants' answers, a wide range of categories for analysis was compiled and coded for later recall and interpretation using a computer software programme named NVivo.

To support this initial qualitative coding, a statistical approach was added by introducing SPSS - a Statistical Programme for Social Sciences - to code the quantitative data. Both of these approaches facilitated, not only the analyses of the personal responses of the participants, but also permitted the combination and comparison of many factors simultaneously, to produce statistical responses.

Hakin (1987) applauded the benefits of surveys, which can provide "more detailed investigation of particular topics or populations to study causal processes" (as cited in Hall, 1992, p. 48). Likewise Deakin (1970) explained the validity of using a statistical approach to test one's theories (as cited in Denzin, 1970, p. 45).

From these analyses, the sociological factors, which contributed to risk taking activities and those, which contributed to alleviating them were identified. The questionnaire also contained opportunities for the comparison of the generic ratings of the risk taking activities with the participants' frequencies of engagement with the activities. The questionnaire provided opportunities to obtain both qualitative and quantitative findings, which were then compared to the literature background, to provide answers to the overarching question and key objectives.

3.5.1 Questionnaire Data Collection

The Senior Secondary Principal provided a list of all Grade 11 female students. The college records identified 220 female students enrolled in Grade 11 and it was to this group that an introductory letter was sent seeking permission for each student to participate in the study. This Grade 11 group was chosen because it reflected a complete cross section of the types of students who formed the clientele for this College. There were those students who were intent on studying for their careers, there were those who would engage in more practical trade and technical courses and those who were unsure about their futures and who were to study general courses before committing to further study or employment outside the College. As stated earlier, one student refused the survey and one mother raised queries about the project with one of the College's Vice Principals. Consequently 219 questionnaires were posted to the female students in Grade 11, together with a reply paid envelope addressed to the researcher's home address.

As each one was returned, a numerical indicator was assigned and at a later date two groups, one with the town females and one with the country females, were collated. There was no need for a sample group from another college in

the same area, as the results could be compared with other studies and the literature reviews.

The senior secondary college, chosen as the setting for this survey, had a very suitable enrolment of over two hundred female students in the age group needed for this study. Because many of these students travelled from outlying districts to attend this college, a postal questionnaire survey was the most useful method to gain the required information. These questionnaires were sent to the females' home addresses, so that the survey could be a discrete activity outside the environment of the college and not one directly involved with the researcher who was a member of staff. In this manner the responses were not influenced in any way by the presence of the researcher or by any contact or discussion with her.

Personal interviews would not have been advisable, as the students would not have had the privacy and confidentiality necessary for the completion of many of the personal responses concerning their negative risk taking participation. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) advised that surveys in the researcher's worksite were not wise because the expectations and attitudes of the co-workers could "make it difficult and untenable" and that "students tell us what is most appropriate or suitable for a teacher" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 62). In this researcher's case, these concerns were not applicable as only the eight College Counsellors were aware that the survey was to be conducted and they were cognisant about the personal nature of the questions, in the event that counselling may be sought by participants as a consequence of the survey.

Additionally, the researcher's role in the College was mainly as a coordinator of a cluster of Open Learning subjects, studied by distance education with only four and a half hours (4.5 hours) involved with the on-site classes with the student body, so the noted criticisms above, concerning site-selection were

not major impediments for this study. There were opportunities in the questionnaire to include both qualitative and quantitative data, an approach, whereby both personal, psychological and private emotional responses to the questions could be juxtaposed with the quantitative data in the risk taking and participation ratings' sections of this study.

Qualitative responses provided opportunities to discover the catalysts for female negative risk taking which could indicate possible strategies for their prevention in the future. The quantitative data provided the comparison of key factors with the risk taking ratings.

One researcher wrote in favour of surveys rather than face-to-face interviews, where the research was on sexual behaviour or alcohol and/or drug use (Lee, 1993, p. 9). In the case of sexual topics, personal and professional risks for the researcher could arise because these are often trivialized and treated in a more humorous manner. Alcohol and drug use information is also not easy to obtain by purely viewing sales' records, so a personal survey may uncover more realistic responses as to the nature and frequency of these activities. The topics could also undermine the researcher's credibility by making them appear to be "subverting traditional values" or by "seemingly being an advocate for particular sexual [and other] practices" labelled "stigma cognition" (Lee, 1993, p. 95).

3.5.2 Response Rate for Questionnaire

From the two hundred and nineteen questionnaires, ninety-nine were returned. Of these only eight were found to be unsuitable, as mature-aged women, who were involved in the Open Learning programme and on the College list, had completed them. Consequently ninety-one, or a response rate of 43 percent of the total Grade 11 female, sixteen to nineteen year olds, formed the group valid for this study. A second issue of the survey was posted after the flow of

initial participants ceased. This encouraged those students, who had not responded, to reconsider their decisions and to join the group in the survey. This strategy resulted in a nil response, possibly because the final examinations were pending, so the total number of participants remained at ninety-one and it was this group, which formed the basis for the analysis of risk taking, amongst senior secondary female students in this area of Tasmania.

3.5.3 Data Collection From Interviews

These questions for this survey came from discussions with School Administrators, Teachers and Parents concerning adolescent, risky behaviours, especially those involving drugs, alcohol use and abuse and the introduction of new hallucinogenic substances into the adolescent life style.

3.5.3.1 Elaboration of Interviews

The Literature Review reminded us that cognition can begin from age eleven, (Kolberg, 1986), so the later school years at the College level would see dramatic changes in the ways adolescents thought, developed new ideas and began to experiment with new behaviours. In any school context, the Principals and teachers all have the role of providing a supportive environment and the necessary knowledge and skills to assist their students to realise their full potential.

For the Principals (Administrators) in Senior Colleges, this role would necessarily demand attention to the specific problems besetting adolescents. Consequently, they would need to cater for the additional curricula programmes, referral systems and expertise to counter the negative risk taking activities which are part of the adolescent experience. By questioning those teachers in these roles, further understanding of the actual “real” life strategies

of what can be done within school administration, in this area, would be obtained.

Teachers would have more face-to-face contact with the problems and negative risk taking of the adolescents in their classes. Teachers and schools have quite an impact on the behaviour of females and males. Therefore, it would be they who would have to be prepared to attend training and information sessions about the actual risks. Additionally, in their pastoral care role, the support teachers, with Principal support, would be responsible for arranging counselling and additional assistance for those students with difficulties. In this light, they would be able to provide additional advice from a “real” perspective on the management of negative risk taking lifestyles.

Parents are the first to exert influences on their children and it is they who would have to guide their adolescent children when many of the risk taking activities in this study appear in their lives. It would also be the parents who would have to deal at first hand with the traumas and tragedies, which could occur with these alcohol, drug and sexual activities. Consequently, a greater sense of “reality” would be added to this study from those with this parental experience.

3.5.3.2 Questions for Administrators, Teachers and Parents

1. What type of discussions should administrators/teachers/parents be having with students about their gender, attitudes, behaviours and life choices?
2. Given that drugs are a part of life today, what strategies should school administrators/teachers/parents use to inform their students?
3. How can school administrators/teachers/parents inform their students about risk taking, both positive and negative?
4. What type of expectations can school administrators/teachers/parents have about the female students’ futures?
5. What stereotypes and views exist for females in today’s society?

6. What type of educational programmes should school administrators/teachers/parents undertake to inform their students about negative risk-taking activities?
7. Consider that you have to counsel a sixteen-year old student. What advice, as a school administrator/teacher/parent, would you give about the following risks:
 - Alcohol Use
 - Drink Driving
 - Speeding
 - Drug Taking
 - Sexual Activity
 - Viewing Pornography

All of these questions would assist researchers to view the problems of adolescence from the viewpoint of those working or living with adolescents.

3.5.3.3 Participants for the Interviews

The group chosen for the school administrator, teacher and parent survey came from the researcher's network of Principals, teachers and parents, along with her University colleagues who were directly working with or raising adolescents, particularly females. Discussions were held with up to twenty personnel and verbal approval was obtained from them and followed by E-Mail permission, before the interview questions were sent electronically.

3.5.3.4 Response Rate for the Interviews

Two administrators, two teachers and two parents completed the set of questions, making a total of six respondents, all working with or raising, or having raised adolescent children, so that their views were current or based on experience. The responses to these questions were coded according to the NVivo software programme, with this process providing five themes derived from the content of the responses. These themes were:

1. Advice to students
2. Expectations for Students

3. Health Concerns for Parents
4. Strategies to Assist Students
5. Resilience Measures for Students

3.5.3.5 Policy Document Analysis

An Internet search yielded many documents about the risk taking activities in this study, namely drug and alcohol use and abuse and sexual activity for adolescents. The total numbers of documents collected consisted of twenty-three, with three from the National Government and two more National policies written up as Tasmanian Reports on Gender and Sexism. The Tasmanian Government had five independent policy documents in total covering all the required topics. Victoria focused solely on a Drugs' Policy, whilst South Australia had two on Drugs and Alcohol together. Western Australia was varied with one each about AIDS/HIV/Hepatitis and one about Drugs. New South Wales had two, one about Gender and one about Drugs. Queensland was more numerous with four, two about drugs and one about HIV/AIDS and the final one, about Gender Equity. Three journalistic reports were also retrieved, one about Australia's drug policy and two about South Australia's sex education limitations. All of the policy documents were analysed using the Five Objectives as listed in Chapter 1 and with an additional Research Objective 7 also outlined in Chapter 1.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Coding of the NVivo Data

Qualitative data coding can be approached in three ways - open, axial and selective - as suggested by Strauss and Corbin. "Open Coding" is the part of the analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorising of phenomena through the close examination of the data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 62). Groups of concepts emerged and these were collected into thirty-

five categories with the Index Tree Root Nodes (212) and Free Nodes (378). The Index Tree Nodes contain the background information as to the respondents' ages, their locality in towns or country areas or number of sisters. Concepts, such as the females' attitudes, were labelled conceptually and these formed the Free Nodes, such as *Personal Description (Positive, Negative)*. Many concepts could be entered under more abstract concepts than was initially presented by the data. An example of this would occur with an answer stating an aspiration to leave Tasmania for another state or overseas. This would be coded as *Aspirations/Relocation*. At other times the data represented the concept being analysed and the names of the categories were logical choices from the information itself, giving a graphic picture of what was intended by the participant, such as *Family Cohesion*. Some of the categories were also concepts mentioned by the participants themselves as in *Mothers' Characteristics/Advice*.

The second type of coding is referred to as "the category axial coding". Axial coding is a process after open coding, whereby data are put back together in new ways by making additional connections. An example of this would be to link *Sense of Identity* with *Family* factors. The third type is called "selective". Selective coding requires the researcher to identify the story involved within the written data, a story, which is a "descriptive narrative, about the central phenomenon of the study". This was identified as the attitudes, perception and participation rates of the negative risk taking activities undertaken by the young women and would be revealed as the categories were grouped and regrouped to answer the key research objectives in this study. This grouping and regrouping assisted the retrieval of all the possible data related to the key objectives of this study.

3.6.2 Coding with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

The second coding session was undertaken to comply with the requirements of the SPSS statistical analytical programme. Each coded category of information from the NVivo coding (e.g. Siblings) was recoded using a numerical value only. These numerical values corresponded to the former Nudist qualitative description. Thus Siblings became 1 = Sisters 2 = No Sisters 3 = Brothers 4 = No Brothers 5 = Both Sisters and Brothers 6 = No Siblings. Once the first coding for this SPSS system had been completed, it was evident that too many variables had been allocated, resulting in small totals in some categories and therefore a second coding was conducted reducing the numbers of variables. The aim in this exercise was to obtain larger groups, up to twenty and no lower than five where possible. As an example *Parents' Educational Levels* were reduced from fourteen variables to four - *Professional/Training, Senior Secondary, To Year 10 and Below Year 10*. At an even later stage some variables were combined to form more purposeful groupings as with religious interests *Religion Yes/Uncertain and No Religion*. Those currently involved with religious convictions were grouped with those who were undecided to provide a more viable numerical outcome, and could be compared to those with an opposing view.

3.7 Originality of the Study

Within the context of my concerns for females coping with the pressures of the twenty-first century, this study was needed to find comparative evidence of female risk taking in both a town and rural context. These two contexts would take the place of control groups often used in studies. The main focus and its original component would be the disparity between the ratings for the perceived risk with the actual risk participation, with an accent on the health

and well being of adolescent females and the short and long term health repercussions of adolescent risk taking. Additionally, programmes to prevent and curb risky behaviour would be addressed. In many studies reviewed, only qualitative or quantitative evidence was provided, whilst in this project, both of these aspects were chosen to provide credence to the findings. The female participants' individual experiences and life and behaviour choices were used to complement the results of the quantitative interpretation of the data. The results were recorded in quotes, case studies, graphs and tables.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of the study was caused by the lack of contact permissible with the participants. There were strict restrictions with the Tasmanian Education Department ethics' approval, emphasizing the need for this study to be completed as if the researcher were removed from the College context and was not known to the participants. No verbal or personal contact about the questionnaire, other than the postal letters and survey, was to be made at any time. Consequently, there was no avenue to follow up their responses with discussion or to question them at a later time, to ascertain the changes in their levels of risk taking. The main failure of the questionnaire was not obtaining specific knowledge about their health concerns. There were opportunities to explain these in their risk taking choices and specific consequences, but these were rarely accessed. The female participants rarely mentioned any health concerns impinging on their lives when discussing their negative risk taking activities and the rationale behind them.

3.9 Summary

This chapter detailed the process undertaken to choose, create and to utilize the methodologies suitable for this study. From the Literature Review and past research, the type of research question was identified and the objectives

established. A thorough review of the questionnaire methodology was undertaken to establish the credibility of the use of the questionnaire to gather data for the first phase of the study. The reasons for the choice of the questionnaire methodology were discussed and the design, scope and focus of this survey instrument were iterated, as were the characteristics of the participants to which it was distributed. The originality of the study in Tasmania was verified by reference to the stimulus of twenty-first century concerns about female negative risk taking concerns and potential health concerns. The response rate was calculated and the methods of analysing the data were described in detail.

The second stage of data collection involved the use of a set of questions presented in an interview style to administrators, teachers and parents. These revealed five themes and the participants' answers were analysed within these parameters. The third stage involved the collation of Policy Documents about the risky behaviours in this study from National and State education sources, again analysed with the original Five Objectives, with one additional one concentrating on the documents' intentions and ramifications for teachers.

Chapters 4 and 5 will provide a summary, in two parts, of the Qualitative and Quantitative data from the NVivo SPSS computer programmes. The Interviews will be analysed in Chapter 6 while the National and State policies on alcohol and drug use and abuse and sexuality will be the focus in Chapter 7. In Chapter 8 conclusions from the researcher's personal reflections, together with comparisons with the literature and the data analyses will be disclosed.

CHAPTER 4**QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS****PART 1****4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter the qualitative and associated quantitative results from the data collection of the NVivo software programme are presented. This data was obtained by coding the nine hundred (900) pages of transcripts from the questionnaires received from the ninety-one female participants from a Tasmanian Senior Secondary School. The numerical references were compared to the total number in the survey, being ninety-one, so that a common foundation was set for both the town and country participants. The main focus was to answer the first Five Research Objectives (ROs) presented in Chapter 1. To answer these questions, axial coding was utilised to make connexions between categories in new ways to form the foundations on which the answers to each question were based.

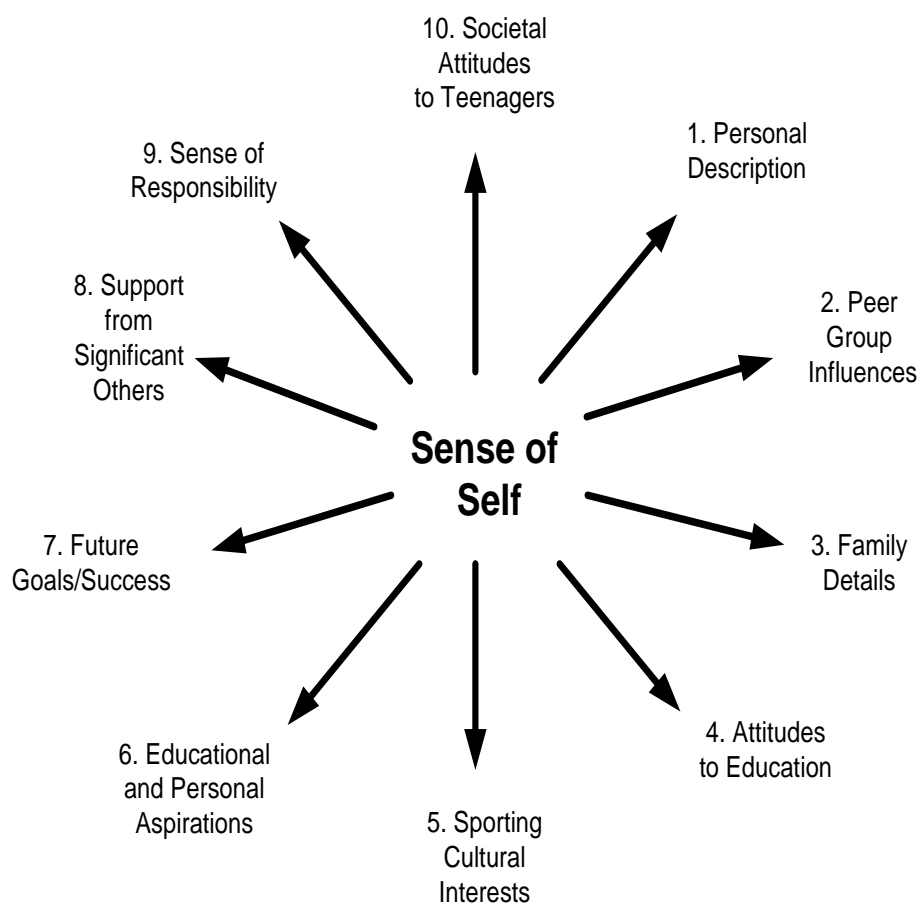
4.1 Research Objectives

RO1. To investigate the concept of “self” in adolescent females, the adolescent females’ aspirations for the future and their risk taking attitudes.

From the NVivo coding a range of concepts was developed and specific attributes were chosen as the axes on which to formulate the response to this objective. This sense of self was judged from the participants’ personal descriptions, followed by the effect of peer group influences. To these aspects were added their family details including their birth order and the presence and effect of siblings. Their attitudes to education and to teachers disclosed their potential for worthwhile careers in the future. Another important aspect

was their involvement with sport, cultural activities, hobbies, church and community educational pursuits. This was followed by the participants' aspirations for the future, their goal achievement, their sense of responsibility and the societal attitudes to teenagers, prevalent at the time of this study (See Diagram 4.1).

Diagram 4.1: The Concepts Impinging on the Participants' Sense of "Self"



4.1.1 Personal Descriptions

Many of the participants from both town and country revealed a multitude of personal qualities regarding their sense of "self" and their characteristics. Being positive, caring and kind were the most prevalent traits. The town participants also identified being outgoing, "friendly", "happy", having a

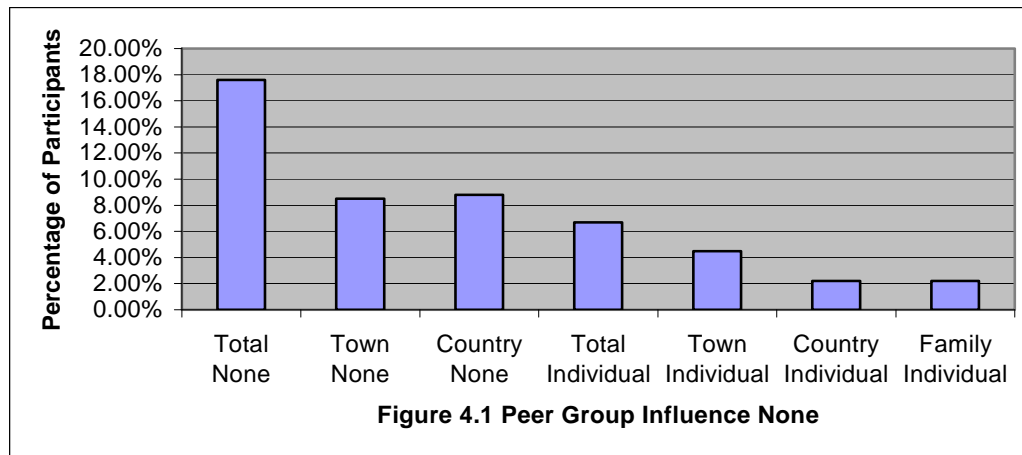
sense of fun”, being a “very dedicated student”, “loyal”, “determined” and being “a person who gets on well with most people”. The country participants were just as positive with “I am friendly, always smiling, cheerful” and another who was very “individual”. On the negative side there were only a few characteristics noted, these including being “stubborn”, “shy”, “talkative” and “moody” with a few having “low self-esteem”.

4.1.2 Peer Group Influence

As far as having a negative peer group influence, as indicated by the literature research, these participants demonstrated very clearly that this was not the case. Sixteen (16, 17.6%) of the participants indicated that they had none, this feature being equally divided between the town and country - eight (8, 8.8%) in each case. Six participants (6, 6.6%), four from the town (4, 4.4%) and two (2, 2.2%) from the country, indicated that they had very unique personalities and were very individual people, even being the peer group “influencer”, judging from the comment the participants both wrote very forcefully, “I influenced everyone else!”

In another response, a country participant explained, “I was too stubborn and I did what I wanted!” Another country participant was committed to always “doing my own thing.” Following what friends wanted to do was not the priority for this particular group of students, although one town participant indicated, “I followed the pack and sometimes felt bad about things at school. I don’t care now.” Family concerns influenced two (2, 2.2%) more town participants. One participant mentioned that the family over-rode the peer group influence because she had no friends and communicated better “with older people”. Another female from the town explained that she “moved a lot” and this consequently caused the lack of friends or a peer group. This constant

relocation would have made it difficult for her to make permanent friends and to forge peer relationships (See Fig. 4.1).

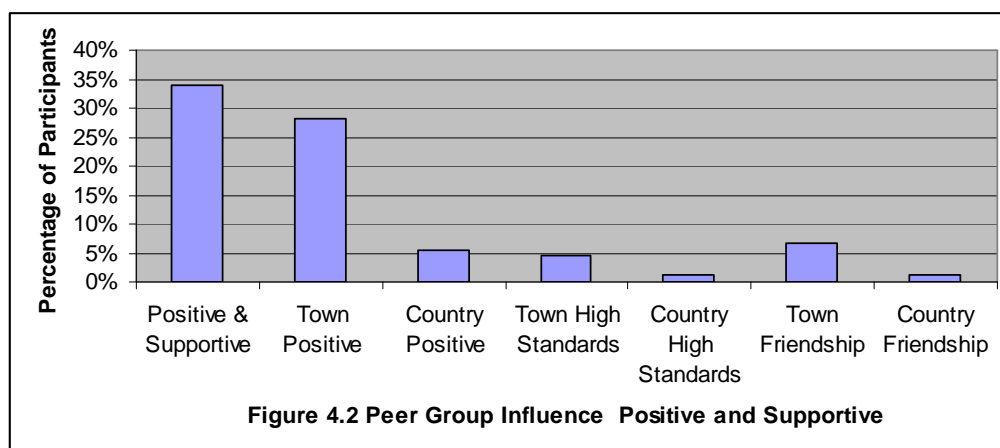


There was a large group of participants, thirty-one (31, 34.1%) from the whole group, who stated that the peer group's influence in their lives had had a positive or supportive aspect. One wrote, "I suppose that I was in the good group...they influenced me on how I acted and presented myself ". Most of those participants who responded in this way were from the town, with twenty- six (26, 28.6%) and only five (5, 5.5%) from the country. Perhaps isolated areas had less peer group members to create this influence or support.

Four (4, 4.4%) of the town participants and one (1, 1.1%) from the country commented on the high standards the peer group had had on them with the emphasis on such attributes as "good behaviour" and being "well mannered" and "friendly to all types of people". One wrote, "They were always hard working, so we influenced each other to do well". There were no major influences, but only "for things like clothes...your hair". Also mentioned was dressing to suit the peer group, "presenting" well and watching designated types of "television programmes". One of these young participants commented on the amount of information being passed on by the peer group members and this had influenced her to follow their positive direction. The

one country participant in this group was able to learn the distinction between “true and false friends” from her peer group.

Friendship was also a key attribute gained from the peer group by six (6, 6.6%) of the town participants and one (1, 1.1%) of the country participants who emphasised “being friendly to all”, no matter what the differences may have been. Close friends were very important, particularly at school, but this closeness could dissolve and individuals could “do their own thing” as one country participant explained. Others talked about learning all the positive aspects of life from their peers, whilst two (2, 2.2%) of the town participants emphasised the “support” they were given. “They supported me in the things I wanted to do and helped me when I needed help”, wrote one participant from the town. Another saw the assistance in another way as “An influence of support” (See Fig 4.2).



Two (2, 2.2%) of the participants, one each from the town and the country, were very assertive that they had been the leaders, providing role models for others to follow. Being in the “good group”, or having friends from “good families”, was important for three (3, 3.3%) of the town students, as there was a strong influence to be “hard workers” at school and to behave well.

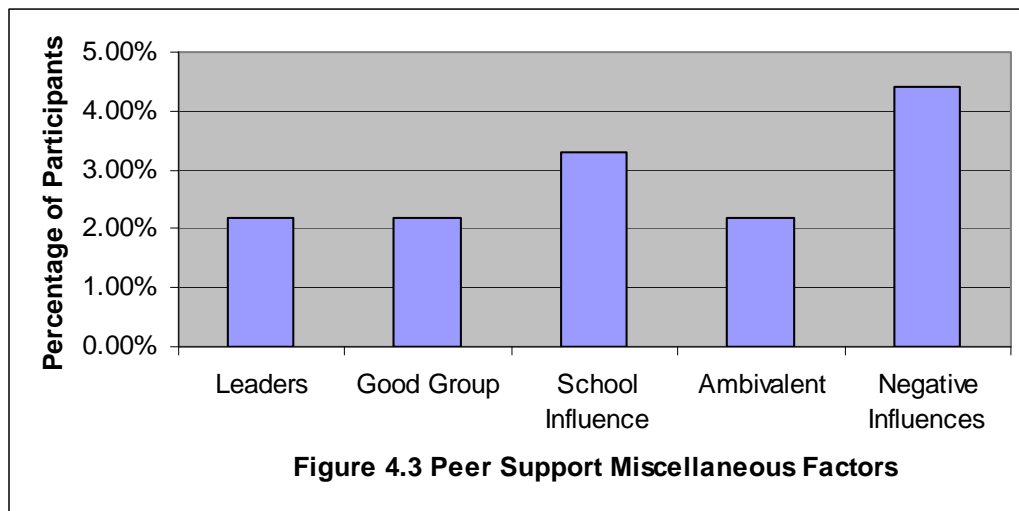
School was important to two (2, 2.2%) town participants and one (1, 1.1%) from the country who had only noticed this peer group influence after “the age

of twelve”. One of the town females remarked that this peer influence was more pronounced “now” at the Senior Secondary School. This could possibly be explained by the fact that the females were now older and they would have more freedom to begin experimenting with different attitudes and activities. Only two (2, 2.2%) of the participants were ambivalent about peer influence, again one each from the town and country. The town participant was “not sure”, whilst the country participant felt that the influence had had only a small impact.

There were only four students (4, 4.4%), all from the town, who had had negative influences from their peer groups. Two examples, from the town group, indicated that it was their personal attributes, which had alienated them, from the main group of their peers. One participant admitted that she was a “loner”, which had caused a negative reaction from her peers and some teasing. She commented that this had made her “a better person” and one “more determined to leave” that group. The other female was teased constantly because she came from a “wealthy family”. She had the best of everything and was constantly made to feel uncomfortable about her “privileges”. Additionally, she was told repeatedly that she really belonged to a “private school group” and not the one where she was currently enrolled, because she would “never fit in with anyone but other rich kids” (See Fig 4.3).

Another town participant remarked that she had had bad influences from her friends’ brothers and sisters, because they were “all smokers” and had been from “an early age”, so she was pleased to escape from their influence. The last negative reaction came from the remaining town female who indicated that she had had good standards of “being polite” given to her, but she had been personally aggressive about these standards and had asked the question “Why bother?” Contrary to the literature regarding negative peer influence and consequent negative risk taking, there is no evidence that the majority of

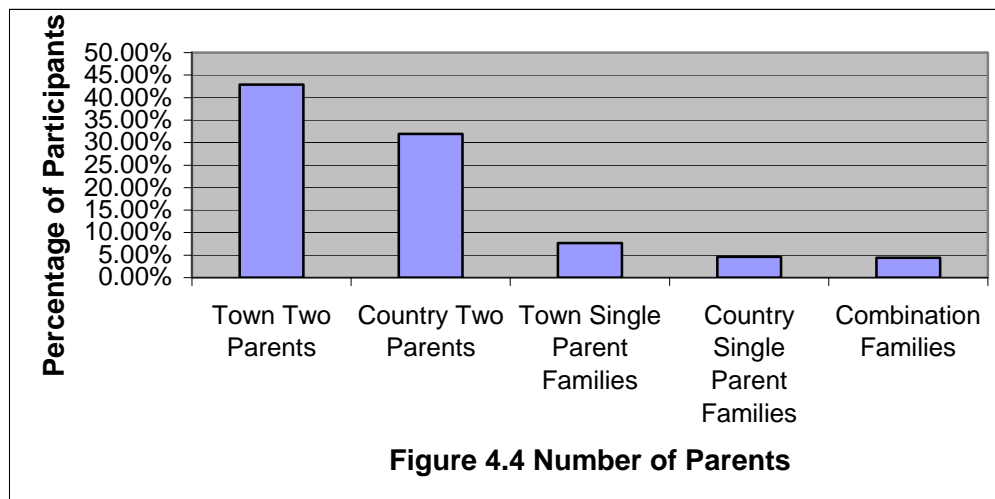
these females had experienced this in any tangible, risk taking way. This was one of the more surprising findings, judging from the importance placed on peer influence in the literature (See Fig.4.3).



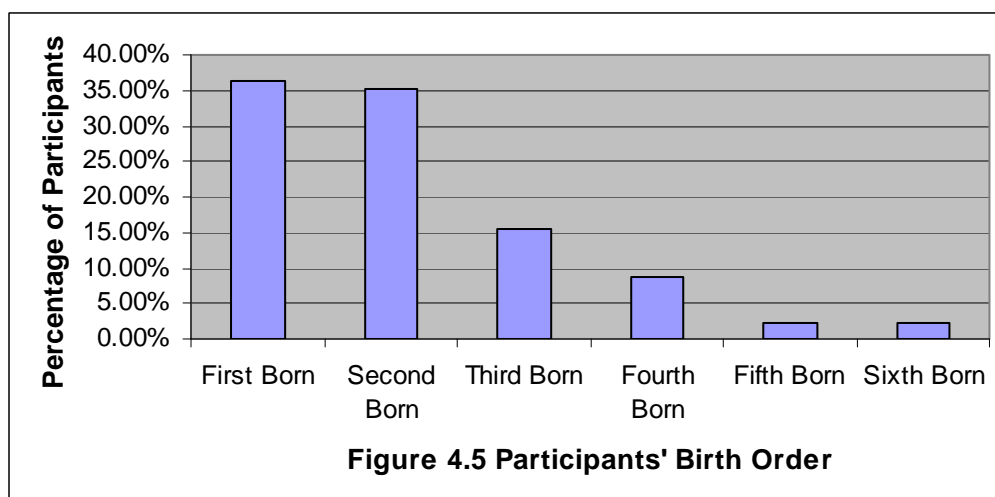
4.1.3 Family Characteristics

Most of the participants in this survey were members of families with two parents, common to one-third (33.3%) of Australian families. This feature was quite evenly distributed between the town, with thirty-nine (39, 42.9%) participants and twenty-nine (29, 31.9%) participants from the country. Perhaps this was a stabilising feature in the participants' lives and contributed to their sense of security and "self". Only one small group, consisting of seven (7, 7.7%) of the town participants and four (4, 4.4%) from the country, recorded single parent families. Another four town participants (4, 4.4%) disclosed that they belonged to families where at times there were various combinations of two parents, then one parent, followed by two again, or other combinations with other adults in the home. Only one of these mentioned the word "separation" and another mentioned that she had had three parents in her life-one being a "step-parent". With the changes in family relationships today, more "step parents" could have been a part of the participants' lives. None of the participants mentioned traumatic incidents or events occurring between

their parents or the level of compatibility between them, but they did record their levels of relationships with each parent, which are detailed in later sections of the thesis (See Fig.4.4).



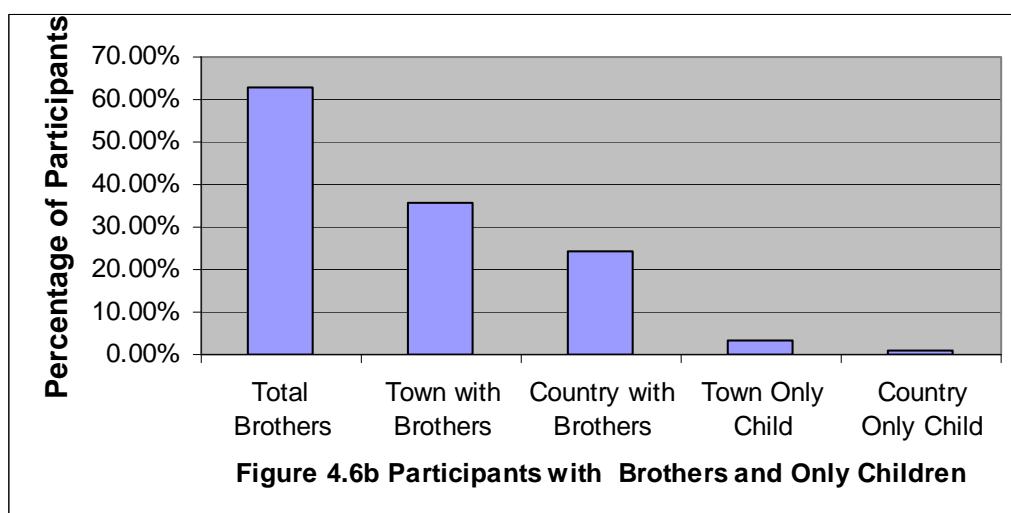
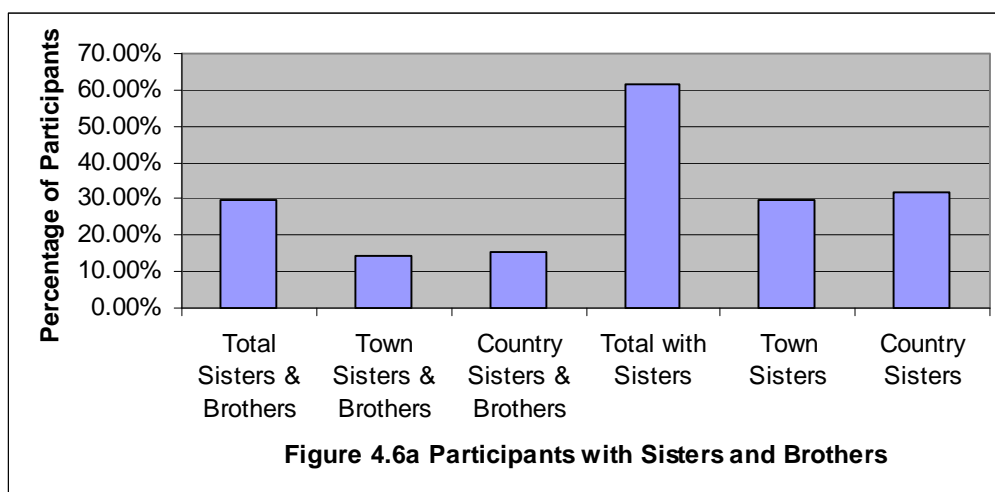
As far as the size of their families was concerned, most of the participants lived in small families with the biggest number of them being first born, with thirty -three (33, 36.3%), closely followed by a group of second born children with thirty-two (32, 35.2%).



There was a big drop in numbers with the group of those in the third position in the family with only fourteen (14, 15.4%) in this category. Another small group of eight (8, 8.8%) were fourth born while two each (2, 2.2%) were in the fifth and sixth born groups (See Fig. 4.5). One of these sixth born participants explained that she had seven brothers, making a family of eight,

not very common in Australian society today. It may have been a “melded” family to have this number of children, but this was not indicated in the response to this question.

There were fifty-six (56, 61.5%) participants who had sisters, twenty-seven (27, 29.7%) from the town and twenty-nine (29, 31.9%) from the country. There were slightly more who had brothers, fifty-seven (57, 62.7%) in all, thirty-five (35, 38.5%) town participants and twenty-two (22, 24.2%) from the country (See Fig.4.6a, 4.6b).

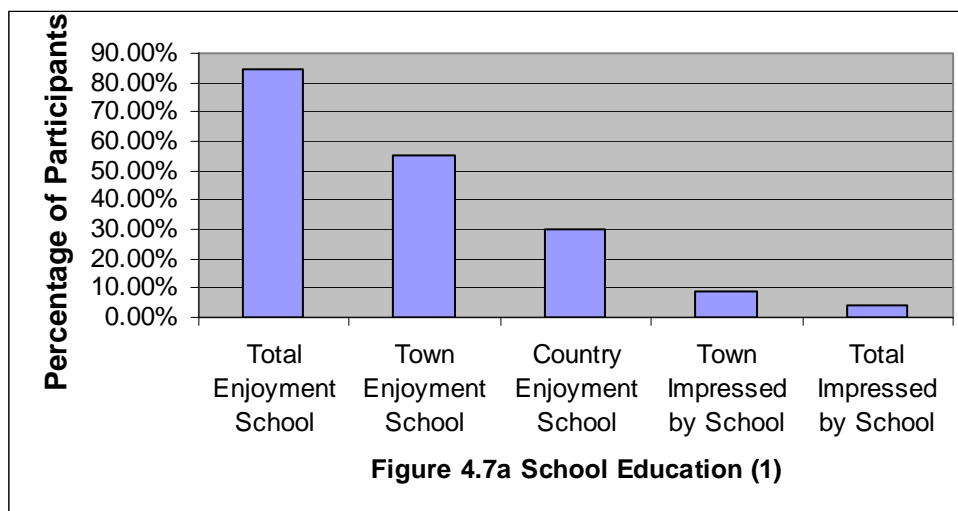


A little more than a quarter of the survey group, twenty-seven (27, 29.7%) of the participants had both brothers and sisters - thirteen (13, 14.3%) from the town and fourteen (14, 15.4%) country participants. Three participants (3,

3.3%) from the town were only children and only one (1, 1.1%) from the country group. There was little comment about the effect that these sibling factors had had on the participants, except for a few brothers exerting control at times in the females' lives (See Fig.4.6a, 4.6b).

4.1.4 Attitudes to Education

Education was a prominent component in the participants' thinking about their future plans and was associated with their "self" and "self worth" and the need to develop their potential.

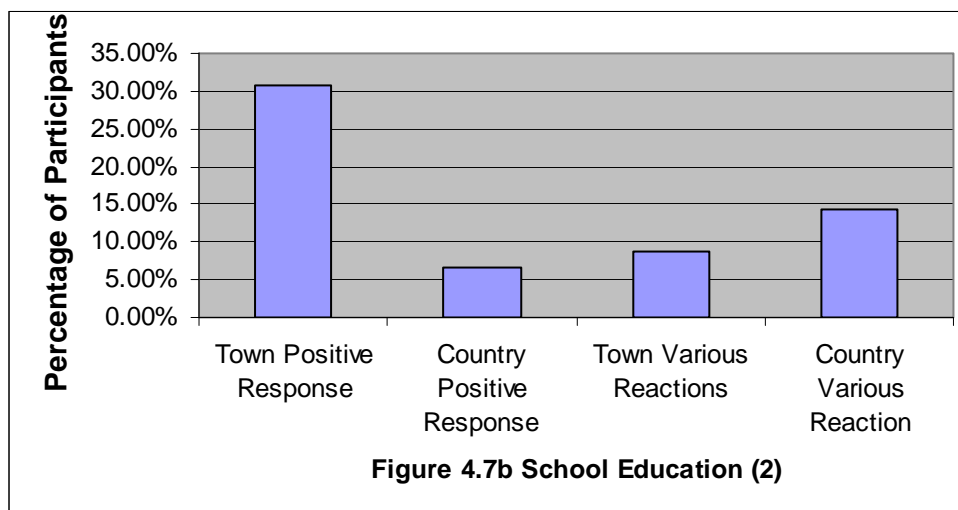


It was no surprise to find that there were seventy-seven (77, 84.7%) participants, fifty (50, 55%) from the town and twenty-seven (27, 29.7%) from the country indicating that they had enjoyed their school experiences at varying levels and for a variety of reasons. Eight (8, 8.8%) from the town were greatly impressed by their schooling and enjoyed it immensely. One commented that "I enjoyed learning new things" and another had "had really good teachers", while another added that she was still (at the time of the study) enjoying her educational experience at the Senior Secondary College (See Fig. 4.7a).

Three (3, 3.3%) from the town and one (1, 1.1%) from the country were impressed by the friendships they were able to make and the interesting and

fun- type activities and games that were associated with schools. One country participant loved the varied activities and the high marks gained, while another commented that college education was better than primary education, but that had been more fun.

Another group of twenty-eight (28, 30.8%) participants from the town and six (6, 6.6%) from the country responded positively to their education. The town participants wrote mostly about the learning that was provided, the fact that the structures involved, suited the “quiet” child, whilst painting, music and art were mentioned as popular subjects. One town participant just “lived for it” whilst for another her love of school came from the negative experiences of incest within her family situation, school being a refuge for her (See Fig.4.7b).



A group of eight town (8, 8.8%) and thirteen (13, 14.3%) country participants enjoyed their schooling to a certain degree, but had some negative reactions to it. The town participants mentioned “tough times” which were not elaborated upon, but were related to another comment about the “highs and lows” inherent in gaining an education and to another where the participant wanted “to stay at home” at times. Another set of comments included disliking the “social aspect” of schooling and only enjoying it in the early years. It was one country participant who mentioned disliking the social aspect and another had

had “yard problems”. Another, from the country, only enjoyed school until Grades 5 and 6, but another loved it after Primary school. The “fun things as well as work” convinced another country student to like school (See Fig.4.7b).

The essence of their school enjoyment is expressed in this latter comment as the education in the Primary School in Australia is based more on creating experiences and developing creativity which adds to their enjoyment, than on learning knowledge for knowledge’s sake. By contrast, school studies beyond the primary years, are more on gaining knowledge and skills and more depth is added to the curriculum.

The most motivated students had varying responses. One country participant had given up a trip “to Sydney to stay at school”, whilst another commented that the variety of friends at High School was a bonus. Additionally, one town student had realised that her education was up to her and had become very motivated and had begun to enjoy her experiences.

Teachers and their influence in this section were only mentioned infrequently. Two (2, 2.2%) opposing views came from the town participants. One only enjoyed teachers who were “easy to get on with”, whilst another had had a “nasty teacher” in Grade 3. One country student (1, 1.1%) coupled a “nice teacher” comment with the fact that her cousins had been at school with her as well and this had added to her enjoyment.

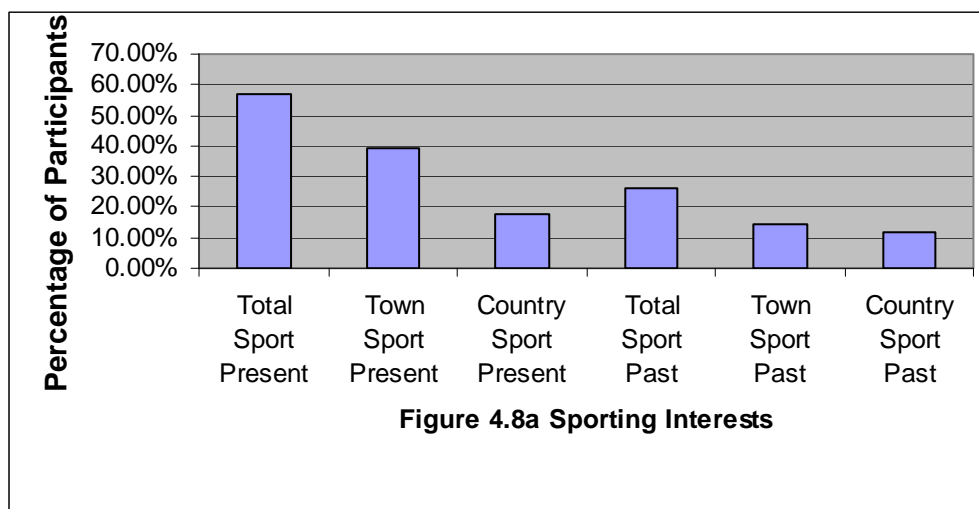
Whilst there were some negative responses, the participants in this study were more in favour of their school experiences than in a negative mode. Most of these revelations indicate that they were motivated individuals, engaging in their schooling for the positive outcomes it would provide.

There is much evidence in all this information to state very definitely that the participants’ sense of identity was very high, aided by their own very positive descriptions and the lack of negative peer group influences. They were

supported by living in stable families, most with siblings of both types and without the mention of a great deal of friction between them. Their attitudes to education and involvement in worthwhile activities provided them with many opportunities to develop themselves more fully.

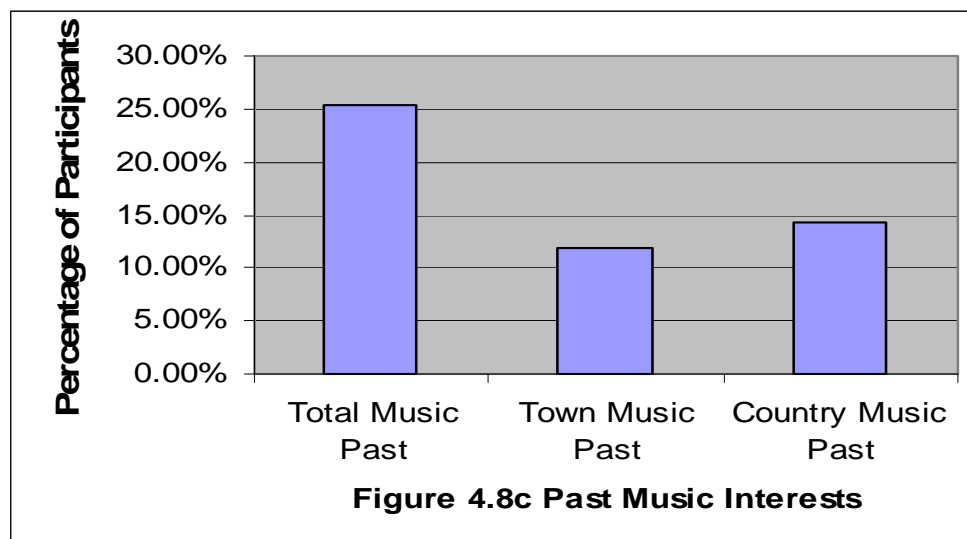
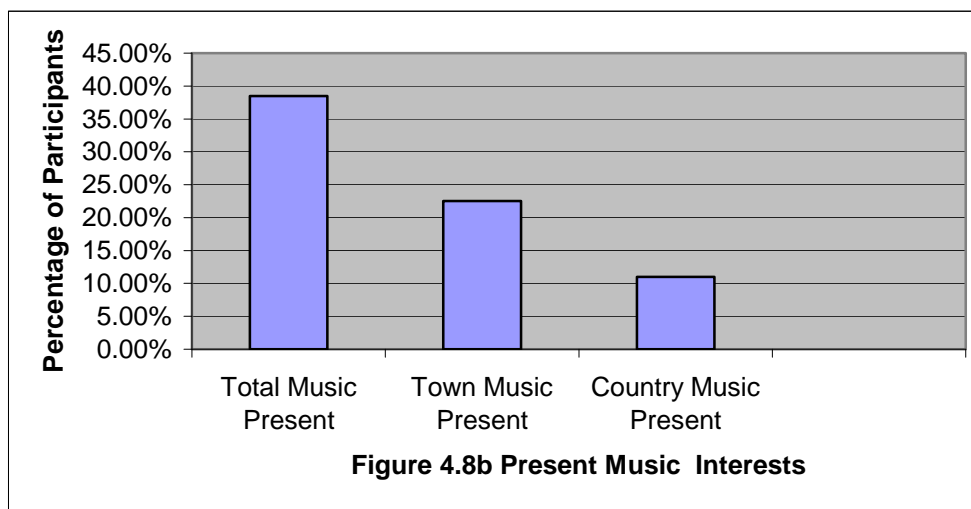
4.1.5 Sporting, Cultural and Recreational Activities

Joining sporting groups was prominent in the participants' activities. There were fifty-two (52, 57.2%) participants in total with thirty-six (36, 39.3%) from the town and sixteen (16, 17.6%) from the country who still played sport. Twenty-four (24, 26.4%) participants had played it in the past with thirteen (13, 14.3%) from the town and eleven (11, 12.1%) from the country (See Fig.4.8a).



Musical activities were also popular with thirty-five (35, 38.5%) engaged at the time of the survey, twenty-five (25, 27.5%) from the town and ten (10, 11%) from the country. One student (1, 1.1%) from the town was involved in dancing and another one from the country played in a band. Twenty-three (23, 25.3%) participants had had musical involvement in the past, ten (10, 11%) from the town and thirteen (13, 14.3%) from the country. Music, as a subject, offered many opportunities for the students in the Senior Secondary College, with college bands, theatrical and musical productions every two years and

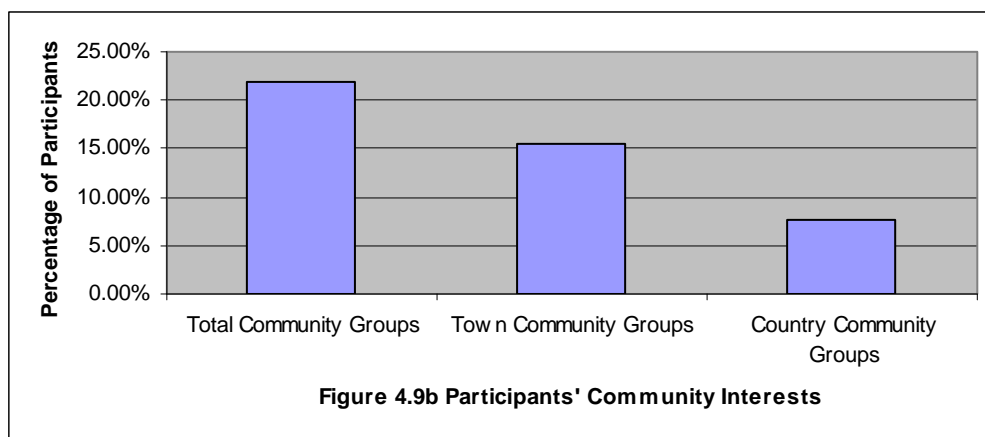
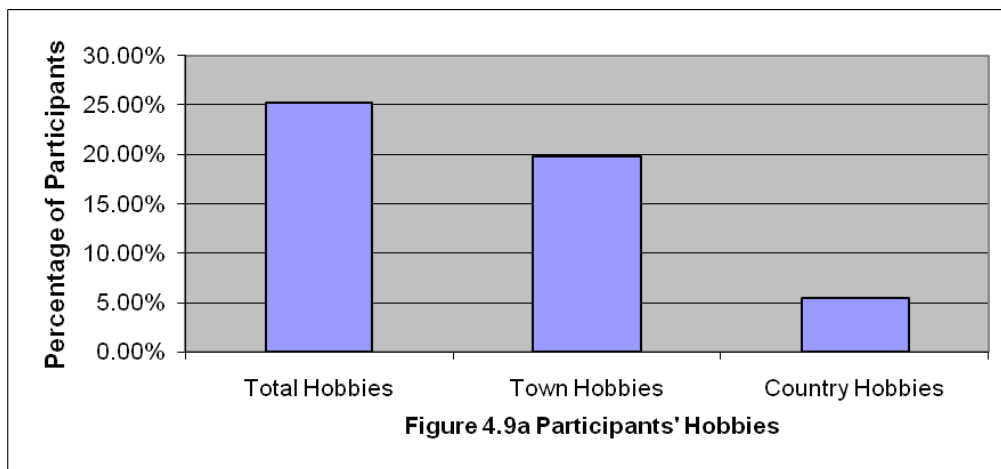
opportunities to learn audio and recording techniques. There were also opportunities for private tuition in piano, violin and singing (See Fig.4.8 b, c).



Hobbies were also popular with twenty-three (23, 25.3%) participants recording an interest in these, with eighteen (18, 19.8%) from the town and a lesser amount of five (5, 5.5%) from the country. Travelling, for some as much as one hour each way, each school day, to the Senior Secondary School and increased homework could have lessened the time for these country participants to engage in these hobbies (See Fig.4.9a).

Community groups occupied twenty (20, 22%) participants, fourteen from the town (14, 15.4%) and seven (7, 7.7%) from the country where there were

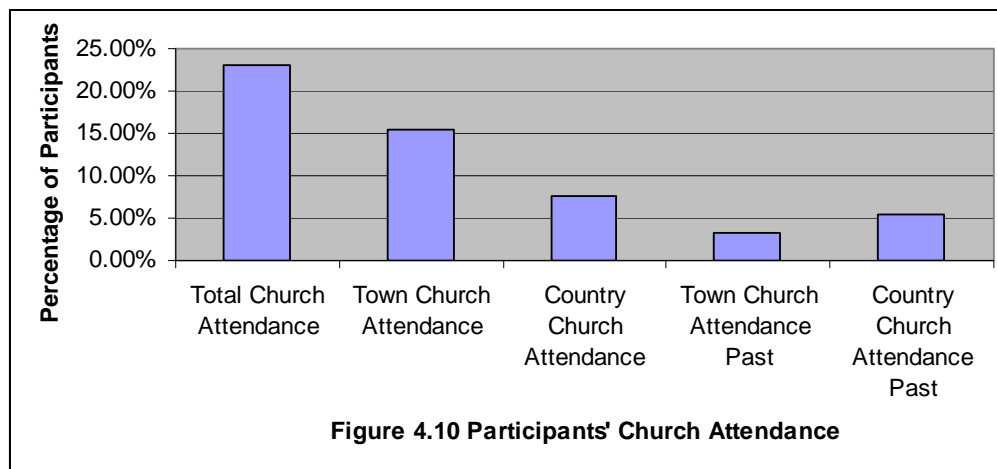
probably less of these organisations to join. Three (3, 3.3%) of the town students had had an involvement with these groups in the past (See Fig.4.9a).



Only eight (8, 8.8%) of the participants recorded a current involvement with any service club, six (6, 6.6%) from the town and two (2, 2.2%) from the country. Two town participants (2, 2.2%) had been members of service clubs in the past (See Fig.4.9b).

Church attendance indicated that twenty-one girls (21, 23.1%), fourteen from the town (14, 15.4%) and seven (7, 7.7%) from the country were involved. Three (3, 3.3%) more from the town recorded having had an involvement in the past with another five (5, 5.5%) from the country. This is similar to the current rating for church attendance in Australia. The college provided

Chaplains at various times to provide general and religious counselling, but these opportunities were free choice activities (See Fig 4.10).



From the NVivo data, the responses to the participants' educational and personal aspirations were complemented by their attitudes about obtaining their goals, the support they had received from "significant others" such as from family members, relatives, teachers and community personnel, as well as their personal aspirations. To these revelations, the likelihood of success or otherwise was rated as being very obtainable, contributed to by the participants' "sense of self", their goals and ambitions and their support systems, coming mainly from their families and significant others.

4.1.6 Educational Aspirations

The participants' educational aspirations demonstrated their very high motivation levels. Seventy-four (74, 81.3%) out of ninety-one (91, 100%) replied to this question, forty-seven (47, 51.6%) from the town with the other twenty-seven (27, 29.6%) being country participants. Many of the girls concerned had multiple reasons for aspiring to higher levels of education. Their replies fitted into twelve categories, representing their aspirations and their goals.

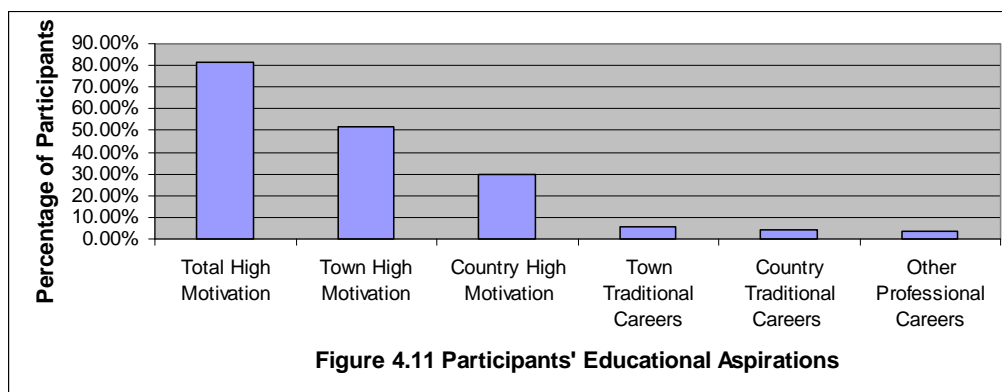
The reasons as to why education was important and why they had the need to find work were the two categories with the most references from both groups. Their educational endeavours were aimed at a wide range of professions. Only five town participants (5, 5.5%) had their goals set on the more traditional careers associated with women, with teaching two (2, 2.2%), nursing two (2, 2.2%) and child studies one (1, 1.1%). The remaining professions ranged from being Psychologists (3, 3.3%) to one each (1, 1/1%) for being a Lawyer, Police Officer and an Accountant, six (6, 6.6%) in total.

Education was necessary for the future of the town participants. A full education was deemed to be desirable and for good jobs a high level of education was necessary. A University Degree and training were also noted as being necessary to gain successful jobs. A degree was also emphasized as a necessity to gain ongoing employment. Completing Year 12 and undertaking further training were strategies to help students to achieve and provided pathways to employment opportunities, further education, TAFE Courses and other specialists' courses e.g. Police Officer.

Four (4, 4.4 %) of the country participants chose the traditional jobs of nursing, teaching, midwifery and child studies - all with one (1, 1.1%) participant. Two participants. (2, 2.2%) had chosen to be Police Officers while there was only one each (1, 1.1%) wanting to be a Pilot, a Physiotherapist, a Lawyer and an Accountant, making six (6, 6.6%) participants in total. One (1, 1.1%) spoke generally about having a "successful" career and another a "good career".

The country participants' responses about education continued to be very similar to the town participants. Two (2, 2.2%) wrote about undertaking a course to assist their futures, while another three (3, 3.3%) wrote about their careers being definitely University based. A "good" education was also

written about in the general terms of offering opportunities and that a university or higher education was better than just the completion of Grade 12. Two (2, 2.2%) mentioned that they had enrolled at the College as they wanted a “good” education and one (1, 1.1%) emphasized that she wanted the “best” education that she could have (See Fig.4.11).



4.1.7 Work Orientation

Finding work was a high priority for both groups of participants. Only two (2, 2.2%) in the town group explained that higher education involvement was solely to obtain work for its monetary reward. Another two participants (2, 2.2%) wanted jobs that they could enjoy, while another one (1, 1.1%) wanted to love going to her chosen work and was emphatic about not wanting to just earn money. Other comments were about a well paid job (1, 1.1%), just a job (2, 2.2%), a better job (1, 1.1%) and “the career I desire” (1, 1.1%), or the highest quality of job (1, 1.1%) which “I can enjoy and have the capabilities to do”. Only one (1, 1.1%) wanted to go to work as soon as possible.

In the country group, four (4, 4.4%) had money as an aim while five (5, 5.5%) wanted to find a good job without the financial consideration and one of these wanted to find work to have a good job. Two (2, 2.2%) saw education leading to a good job and one of these women wanted to leave on a journey to find a career “where I want to go”. Only one (1, 1.1%) saw work in “enjoyment” terms while another participant realized that an excellent job would “set [her]

up for life”. The final comment from this group explained that education sets up prospects for later work.

Money and the earning of it had wider applications than merely a mercenary one. Only one (1, 1.1%) town participant saw money as the one aspect on which her security depended, while another did not want financial problems. Only one town participant mentioned setting up her own “business”.

One (1, 1.1%) in the country group saw education as increasing her employment options and another one as gaining independence with the financial rewards gained from work. Lifelong values were also mentioned in the participants’ answers. Three (3, 3.3%) of the town group commented that education would provide the catalyst for “experiences” in their future lives, one especially being certain that this would be in difficult areas. Only one (1, 1.1%) country participant looked at the impact of her education in life’s terms. Other general comments from the town group included the comment that educational results looked “good on resumes”, that they “would have achieved something” and that some students were “lost without school”.

4.1.8. Personal Aspirations

On a personal level the town participants remarked that they wanted to make a good life for themselves or to make something of their lives. They did not want to be seen as failures but wanted rather to feel good about themselves or to make something of themselves. Education and University study were really important goals. Only one (1, 1.1%) town participant mentioned “an interest in Science” and in particularly enjoying it, while another aimed for “happiness” and mentioned the “need for it”. The country participants were different with their comments on general aspirations with only two comments. One wanted to “stimulate the brain” while the other did not want to waste a “high IQ”.

Very small clusters of participants, from each group, were more uncertain about their educational aspirations. This uncertainty came from being daunted by the prospect of University or because the participants had no interest in this type of education. One town participant (1, 1.1%) was concerned that she was not intelligent enough while another town participant was concerned about the expense of University education.

A TAFE, (Technical and Further Education), course was preferred by another participant from the town group and another had an Apprenticeship as her goal. Only one mentioned that she did not “like any schooling” to any degree. This uncertainty about education was also reflected in the replies from the country participants. Their reasons covered four similar reasons. One was not ready for work at the time of the survey, while another had TAFE (Technical and Further Education) plans aimed specifically at obtaining a job. Two were disappointed with College education generally and did not like being there. Senior Secondary schooling had not proven to be what they thought it would be to them.

4.1.9 Goal Achievement

There were seventy-three participants (73, 80.3%), forty-eight (48, 52.8%) from the town and twenty-five (25, 27.5%) from the country, who recorded very positive comments regarding the realization of their goals, which included career, education and training, finding work and personal factors such as having a family and finding happiness. Other considerations included owning a business and having success, engaging in sport, finding a vocation, travel or relocation, making an effort and gaining security.

Only seven (7, 7.7%) participants, four (4, 4.4%) from the town and three (3, 3.3%) from the country, had a negative view about their chances of achieving their goals. The town participants made comments such as “I lack the

commitment” or “I will probably not succeed. Anything I’ve wanted, I have never got. I’m cursed because...” but she did not finish with a reason. Another admitted that whilst she had goals “I don’t want to”, possibly indicating a lack of motivation. The final town comment conceded that her set of goals would most likely be taken over with “I’ll probably stay in [my home town] and work as a Child Carer”. One country participant did not think she would achieve all her goals, “but why not have them, so you can look on [them] and look back” and another agreed, “we can all dream about achieving our goals”. The final negative comment was based on results with “No, I don’t have the grades I need to achieve my goals”.

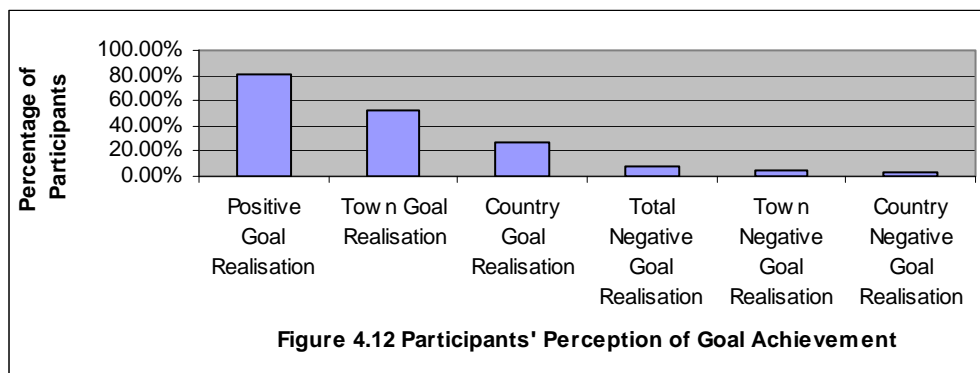
Twenty of the participants, nine from the town (9, 9.9%) and eleven (11, 12.1%) from the country were all very determined to succeed. The town participants emphasized this with comments such as “I am really, really determined which can be a problem” and “These goals will be achieved!” The country participants had similar comments about their determination in “I am an eager person” and “I won’t settle for any thing less!” Another logical comment explained, “If I achieve one, the others will follow naturally!”

Another twenty participants, fourteen (14, 15.4%) from the town and six (6, 6.6%) from the country, spoke further about their work ethic with comments such as, “I am willing to work for it” and “these goals can be reached with hard work and dedication” these coming from the town group. In like manner the country participants made comments such as “I can do anything if I work at it” and “I am willing to put in the hard yards to get there”.

Only one town participant disclosed information about “having family support” whilst another five (5, 5.5%) participants, four from the town and one from the country wrote about the belief in themselves. “I believe I do have the intelligence to do it” and “I do not want to live a life contrary to my

personal beliefs” were the comments from two of the town participants and from one country participant came “when I set myself something...I make sure that I do it”.

Ten participants, six (6, 6.6%) from the town and four (4, 4.4%) from the country were very positive about themselves. One example of this came from the town group. She advised everyone to “Think positively and you will achieve anything”. Having a definite desire for goal achievement was also important for three participants because as one wrote, “it is what I have been dreaming about” (See Fig.4.12).

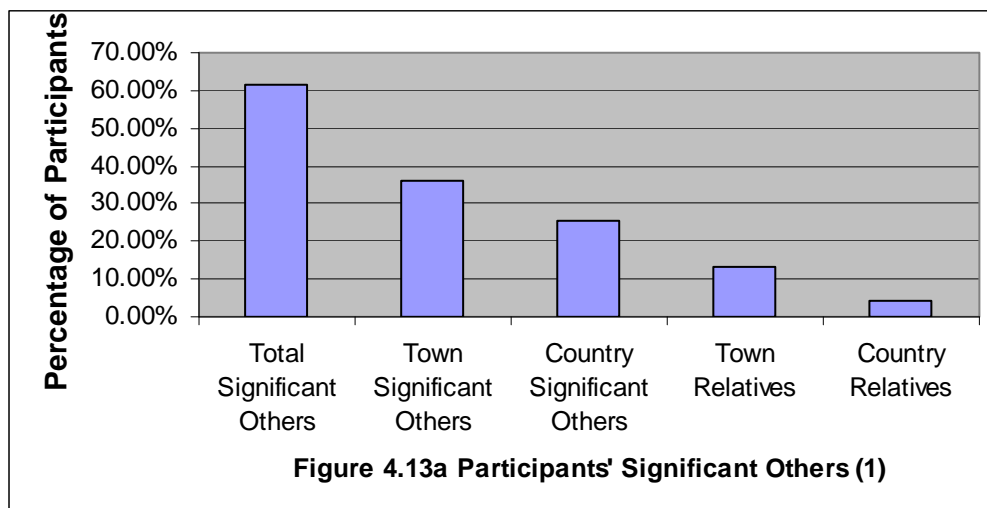


4.1.10 Significant Others

There were fifty-six participants (56, 61.6%), thirty-three (33, 36.3%) from the town and twenty-three (23, 25.3%) from the country who indicated that there had been “significant others” in their lives. There were men and women and young people who had inspired them in some way to be the females they were and to adopt the values they had or the aspirations they were expounding. These “significant others” were found in their immediate families and relatives as well as from the teaching profession and the community, although there was only minimal influence from the latter category.

4.1.10.1 Relatives

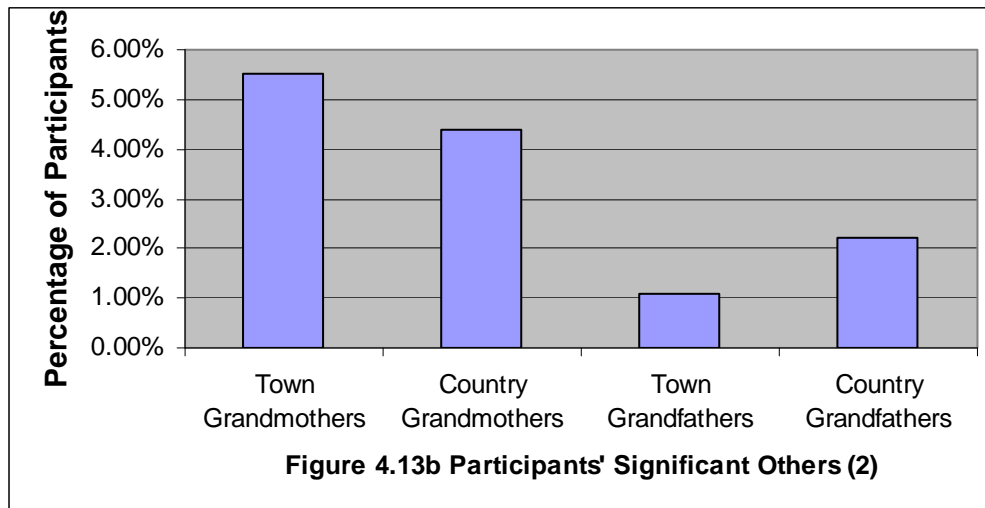
General references to the influence of relatives formed the major list of comments about the significant people in the participants' lives. There were twelve (12, 13.2%) participants from the town and four (4, 4.4%) from the country who were impressed by their relatives who had given them worthwhile advice about how to respect others and to be cautious in their daily interactions. They were also given encouragement to follow their ambitions, by having a sense of purpose, and to be happy with their lives. The relatives were honoured for spending time with them, listening to their advice and receiving and returning their affection (See Fig.4.13a).



Grandmothers were the next group to receive praise for their contributions. There were nine in this category, five (5, 5.5%) town females and four (4, 4.4%) from the country. The grandmothers provided a different space and a refuge for some of the participants and taught the young females valuable knowledge, such as a “foreign language” (Dutch) or general lessons about people, being “caring, kind, loving and generous”.

Another group of seven participants (7, 7.7%), four (4, 4.4%) from the town and three from the country (3, 3.3%) indicated that both grandparents had influenced them. Again they had given them time, love, care and valuable

advice about acceptable behaviour and making the most of their abilities. Three females, one (1, 1.1%) from the town and two from the country (2, 2.2%) recorded their grandfathers' contributions. Their love, the knowledge and values they taught the participants, and "the respect" one grandfather from the country had had in his community, impressed these participants (See Fig.4.13b).



Sisters (and one brother) were also recorded as being influential in the lives of these young women. Five (5, 5.5%) from the country wrote about their sisters' influences. One sister had a twin-sister, who was her significant other, whilst another was influential because of her "strong character". Having someone to spend time with and the sisters being older, with more experience, were also beneficial factors in these females' lives. Only one participant had an older brother who was influential in her life.

Cousins were also important for six (6, 6.6%) participants, three (3, 3.3%) both from the town and from the country. The main contribution for five of the young women was that these cousins were older and had been through some of life's stages before them and therefore could alert them "as to what to expect". The sixth participant (one from the country) had been influenced by her cousin's creativity.

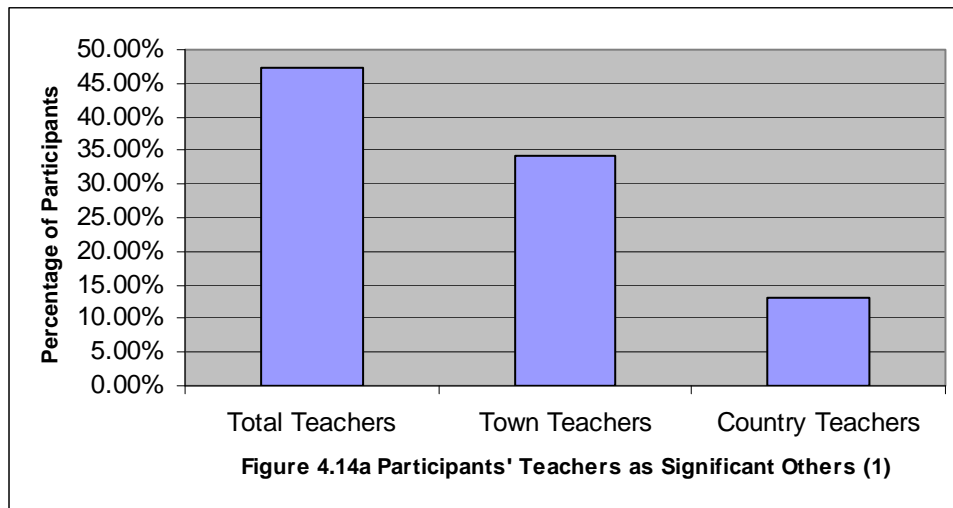
Aunts and Uncles were also mentioned in this significance category with five (5, 5.5%) participants choosing Aunts, two (2, 2.2%) from the town and three (3, 3.3%) from the country. They were admired for their “success” in life, their “ambition” and one for following “her aspirations”. One town participant had an Uncle who gave her the best advice and one each from the town and country had Aunts and Uncles who inspired them together, one pair, because of their creativity. Mothers and fathers received little recognition in this section, mainly because it did concentrate on “others” in the participants’ lives and provision was made in other questions for parental comments. Two (2, 2.2%) participants from the town admired their mothers for their “stability” and “helpfulness”, while another two (2, 2.2%) from the town commented on both parents for their discipline and general teaching (parental) role.

A godfather and a nephew were also influential for two participants, one (1, 1.1%) each from the town and from the country. The godfather had influenced the town participant, because he had been interested in different types of art, while the nephew had influenced the country participant, because he was older and knew what to expect about her next stages in life.

4.1.10.2 Teachers

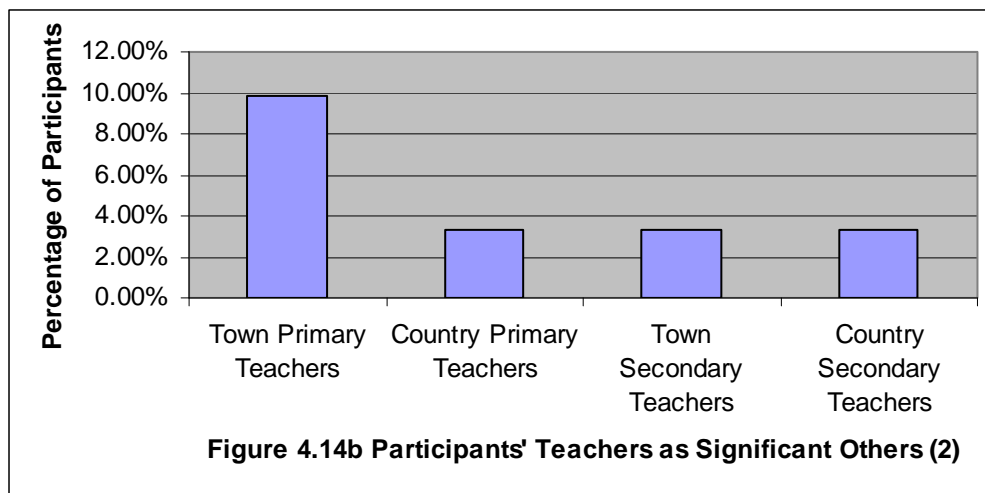
There were forty-three (43, 47.3%) responses as to the significance of teachers in the participants’ lives, thirty-one (31, 34.1%) from town participants and twelve (12, 13.2%) from the country. More than half of these comments, twenty-six (26, 28.6%) were of a general nature - nineteen (19, 20.9%) from the town and seven (7, 7.7%) from the country - and did not specify year levels or specific subject teachers. Instead, they focused on the motivational contributions teachers had passed on to them. Comments included “influencing” and “encouraging” the students, making them believe that they “could achieve anything”. Many teachers had had “faith” in their students and

believed that they could do well, providing insight into what these young females could achieve. The other general comments clustered around the need to work hard, to do their best or to focus on particular skills such as Art or Music.



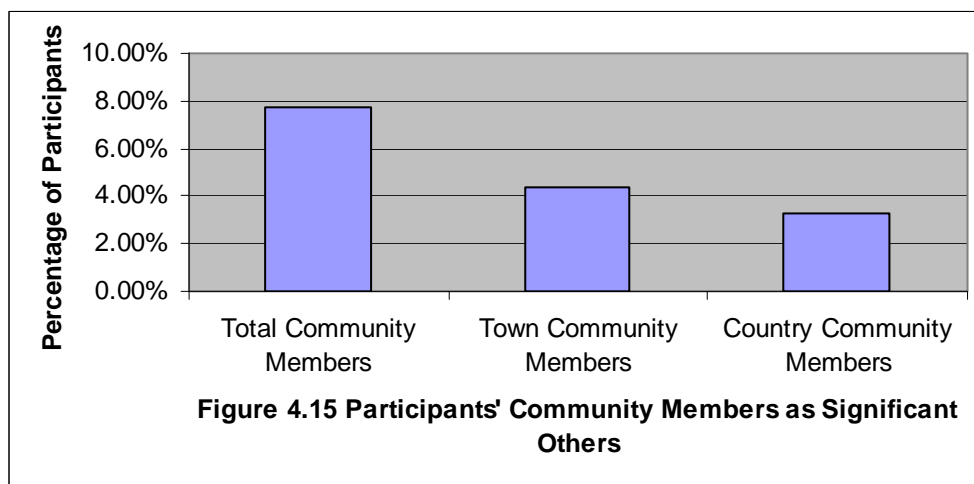
Another group of participants focused on Primary School teachers, nine (9, 9.9%) from the town and three (3, 3.3%) from the country. These teachers had taught the participants valuable skills and knowledge, given them confidence and from some, the ability to have fun whilst learning. They had also displayed care and kindness and had been very helpful in their dealings with their pupils (See Fig.14.4a).

The Secondary School Teachers, with three (3,3.3%) each from both the town and country, had inspired these students, given them “confidence” and had provided subject choices or advice about life in general. This was not surprising to note, because the Secondary and Senior Secondary High Schools in Tasmania have active programmes from Grade 8 (second year High School) whereby teachers of specific curricula actively encourage the students to focus on their talents and skills and to prepare for work in the future. This encouragement obviously affected some of the participants in a positive way (See Figure14.4b).



4.1.10.3 Community Members

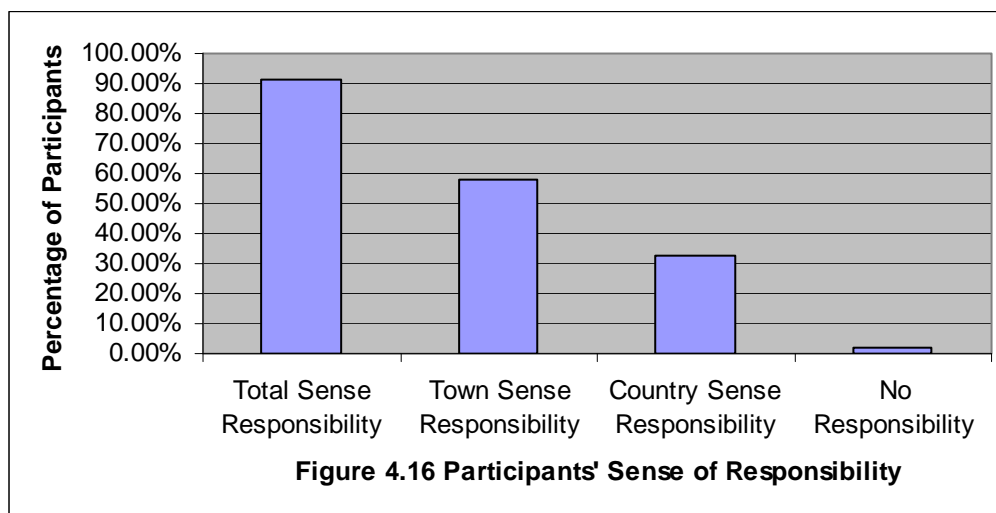
Only seven participants, four (4, 4.4%) from the town and three (3, 3.3%) from the country had had influences from community members. A Ventura leader had taught one town participant to be daring, brave and adventurous, whilst a Diabetes Educator and a Church and Youth Group Leader had given significant support for two of the country participants.



The other “community” comments recognized the general advice given to the participants, such as to be friendly, positive and proactive about life. The participants in their school years would not have had time to have been very involved with their communities, except for the sport, music and to a lesser extent church activities, already mentioned (See Fig.4.15).

4.1.11 Sense of Responsibility

There were eighty-three (83, 91.3%) participants who overwhelmingly supported the concept that they were very responsible for their lives and actions with (53, 58.3%) from the town and thirty (30, 33%) from the country. The comments included “I feel very responsible for what happens in my life. I am old enough and dependent enough,” wrote one participant from the town. This sense of responsibility extended into action when another town participant added “because if I do something wrong I have to deal with the consequences”.



The responsibility was also proactive for other town participants who commented, “I pay close attention to what I do” and another who wrote “At 16 or 17 you have to take responsibility for your own actions”. Several town participants were positive that neither destiny nor fate was responsible for their lives. One was very definite with the comment “There is no destiny” as “you always have choices” and another would not blame her parents. Her comment was “My Mum and Dad can’t control everything” (See Fig. 4.16).

Two (2, 2.2%) town participants felt that some aspects of life were out of their control and so they had no responsibility. One wrote, “There are things that will be out of my hands e.g. Accidents, Disease”, but another countered this

with. “The trick is to deal with the bad ones [decisions]...[and] to make the most of the good”.

On the more cautious side of blaming other factors, one country participant expressed her idea that other people can interfere with your destiny, because “things are sometimes rebounds from what I have done, but others are other people’s fault”. Another country participant agreed with “I can’t control other people’s actions...but I am physically responsible and to the most part mentally responsible”. There were very few negative comments about responsibility. A further country participant returned to the concept of fate again, admitting that she was “Very responsible, but fate can wreck things”. Another from the country was conscious that “At the moment [there] is not much, but it will hit me when I turn 18”.

4.1.12 Societal Attitudes to Adolescents

There were only four (4, 4.4%) participants who acknowledged explicitly that they were in a “rite of passage” between childhood and adulthood. They did this by commenting on the age group they were in, with, “at 14-16”, being spoken to “like kids”, and “at 16-18” being the “worst time in my life” when it is hard to find one’s identity and at 18, it “sucks” and “one should not have to wait until 18 to do things”. It was only in the last general question about being a teenager that the participants showed the depth of their feelings about this time known as adolescence.

The biggest majority felt that there were many negative aspects to being a teenager and that the society perceived them all to be moulded in the same “stereotype” and lacked understanding about them. Society failed to realise that they were “individual” and “adult people” with many views and opinions because “We do know stuff!” Instead they are seen as “troublemakers” and in a bad category in society. They were often judged by “their looks” and

stereotypical views were placed upon them and their actions were seen as risky. This prevented the adolescent developing his/her individuality and it could become the most “painful and most confusing time in our lives”. Adolescents are not all the same and they are not a disgrace to the community and should not be blamed for “doing things which they have not done”.

Adolescents in turn had to find their own place in society and society needed to accept that appearance is not everything and to give them a chance. They do have “concerns about our world” and need more credit. There are many opportunities for adolescents in society, but the participants felt that they were not always given the chances to take them up.

The participants felt that members of each community should listen to adolescents more and realise that they are not “hooligans”. The adults have been teenagers themselves and should realize that they, too, had made mistakes.

“Experimentation with drugs” resulted from a harsh society and parents who were “stricter” than the norm and alcohol and depression could lead to suicide for some adolescents. The teenagers, themselves, also needed to realize that “popularity” was not the key to their happiness, an illusion, perhaps, to one negative effect of the peer group.

On the positive side, a quarter (25 percent) of the participants felt that they were “treated well” and were not made unwelcome in society. Today they have much more freedom and much is offered to them as far as opportunities are concerned. Success for adolescents depends on the teenagers’ attitudes and choices in life. Peer pressure can be confronting for some, as these feel that they are always trying to fit in, but the key element expressed was that adolescents needed trust from the adults in society.

4.1.13 Summary of Research Objective One

Overall the results for Research Objective One of the survey were very inspirational and held much promise for the participants' futures. Their educational aims were not aimed at purely monetary gains, but in providing worthwhile lifestyles from their academic or skilled training. There were difficulties noted because of their perceived lack of ability or lack of confidence, but these may have been overcome with further time at the Senior Secondary College, this survey being taken during the second term in their first year of the two years' education being offered by this educational facility. The lower results for the country participants in most of the educational destinations may have been caused by their isolation and the costs of moving on long-term bases to the larger centres of Launceston and Hobart for further education.

It is evident that the participants in this section of the questionnaire had very high aspirations and they were influenced greatly by their relatives and that close family influences were very important to them. Teachers also had some influence on the development of their potential, but the general notion of community, with all its social capital, was sadly lacking as a major influence in these young women's lives.

The overarching question for this study was defined as "What is the level of negative risk taking amongst female students in a Senior Secondary School environment?" The risk taking levels in the following table indicated that, in spite of high aspirations and influences from many sources, there was still some negative risk taking involvement at this adolescent stage. High on the list was Drinking Alcohol at the combined Occasional and Regular Rates with a total of seventy-three (73, 80.3%) representing a very high percentage of participants. Binge Drinking had forty-eight (48, 52.8%) at the combined

Occasional and Regular rates, this representing more than half of the participants. Sexual activity without contraception was lesser in frequency with thirty-nine (39, 43.9%) at the combined Occasional and Regular rates, but this still represented a dangerous risk-taking activity. Sexual activity with strangers was markedly lower with only three (3, 3.3%) recorded at the combined Occasional and Regular rates. Smoking Hash was relatively high at twenty-nine (29, 31.9%) at the combined Occasional and Regular rates, representing nearly a third of the participants. The viewing of X-Rated videos was higher than expected at twenty-two (22, 24.2%) at the combined Occasional and Regular rates. However, the participants did not see this as a dangerous risk-taking activity having recorded it earlier with only one out of seven on the risk rating scale (See Table 4.1).

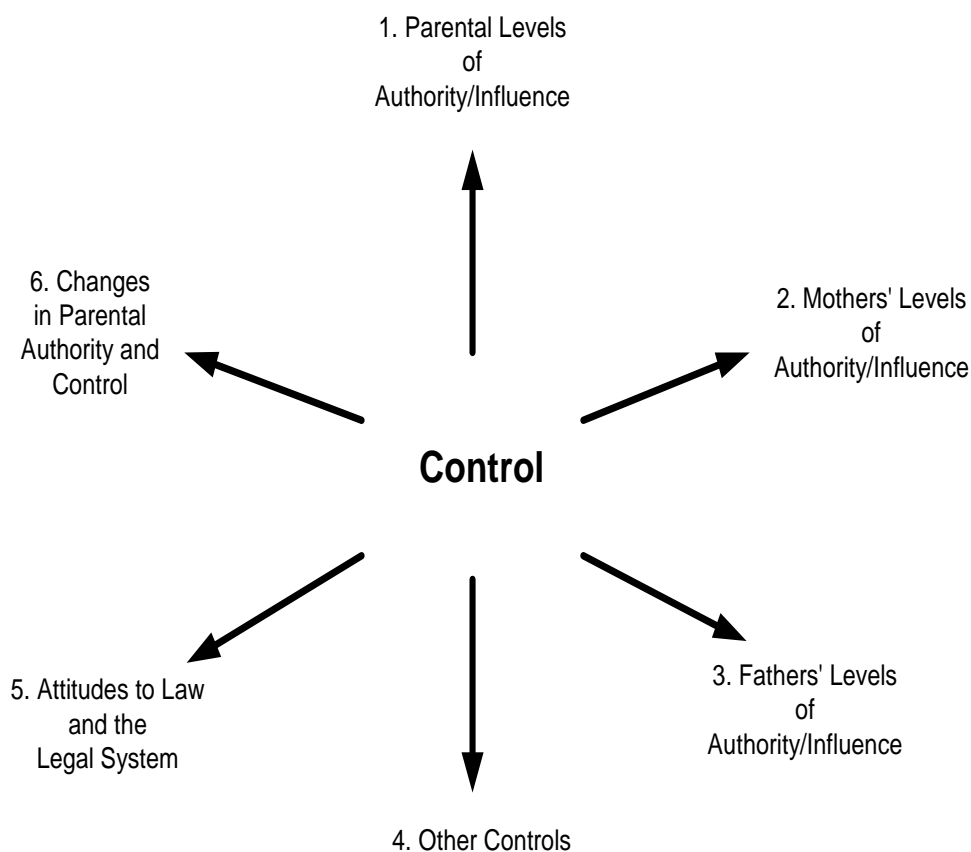
Table 4.1. *Risk taking rating compared to risk participation rating.*

Activity	Risk Rating 1-7	Risk Participation 1- 4			
	1= Not Risky to 7= Very Risky	1=Never	2=Once	3=Occasionally	4= Regularly
	Mode	Mode			
Binge Drinking	4	3 (38)	1 (4)	2 (26)	3(38) 4 (10)
Drinking Alcohol	2	3 (45)	1 (8)	2 (8)	3 (45) 4 (28)
Sex –No Condom	7	1 (60)	2 (12)	3 (14)	4 (5)
Sex – No Pill	7	1 (63)	2 (7)	3 (14)	4 (6)
Sex – Strangers	7	1 (81)	2 (8)	3 (1)	4 (2)
Sharing Needles	7	1 (88)	2 (2)		
Smoking Hash	7	1 (38)	2 (25)	3 (24)	4 (5)
Sniffing Glue	7	1 (84)	2 (5)	3 (3)	
Cocaine Use	7	1 (89)	2 (1)	3 (2)	
Heroin Use	7	1 (85)	2 (1)		4 (2)
Speeding	7	1 (72)	2 (14)	3 (7)	
Taking Speed	7	1 (83)	2 (5)		4 (2)
X-Rated Videos	1	1 (39)	2 (31)	3 (19)	4 (3)

4.2 Research Objective 2

RO2. To determine the amount of personal control, evident in the adolescent females' lives in their younger years and their attitudes regarding the law, legal restrictions and adult authority.

Diagram 4.2: The Amount of Control on the Participants' Lives



To answer this research objective, the authority levels of both parents combined were examined and then juxtaposed with those of the mother and father separately. Other control sources, peripheral to the family were then added to complete the levels of power exerted upon the students' lives. In this section the participants' attitudes to the law and legal system were compared to the changes in their parents' authority and control and the state of their relationships with them at this stage of their adolescence (See Diagram 4. 2).

The literature review commented on the nature of the relationships between adolescents and parents. At times it was noted that there would be conflict, but in other cases, there was the assurance that these relationships began to improve as each adolescent began to see their parents as people and not as people in opposition to them. The relationships between teachers and students, in Australian and Tasmanian schools, have become more collegial as methodologies have become more creative, where students are permitted more freedom to choose their learning style and sections of their curricula. With risk taking, the students will be clashing not only with parents, but also with the associated State laws and the legal system.

4.2.1 Parental Authority

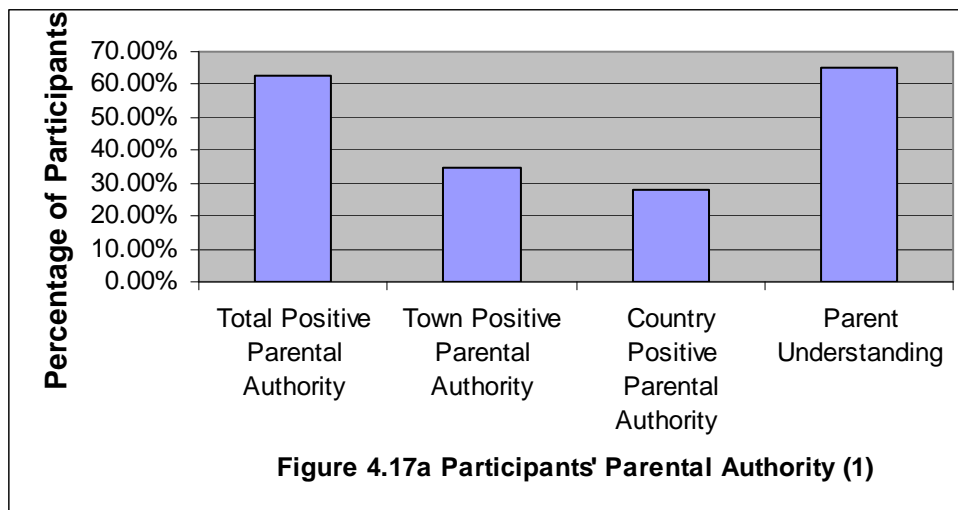
The participants wrote predominantly in favour of their parents' level of authority over them. There were fifty-seven (57, 62.7%) participants out of the total survey group with thirty-two (32, 35.2%) from the town group and (25, 27.5%) from the country, who offered very positive comments about their parents' level of control over their lives.

Many from both these groups, (59, 64.9 %) were consistent with comments indicating that their parents understood them, were fair and that the students could reason with them.

Other participants added that their parents trusted them and treated them like adults. Several also commented that it was good to have advice for "socializing me and teaching me moral and valuable standards" and a balance of freedom and restrictions during this adolescent time.

Only two (2, 2.2%) students indicated that there was no control by parents in their lives, both in the town group, whilst four (4.4.%), three (3, 3.3%) from the town and one (1, 1.1%) from the country, indicated that parental

relationships and subsequent control were based on “respect”. Another five, two (2, 2.2%) from the town and three (3, 3.3%) country participants indicated that they had learnt “to accept or comply” with the parental levels of control.

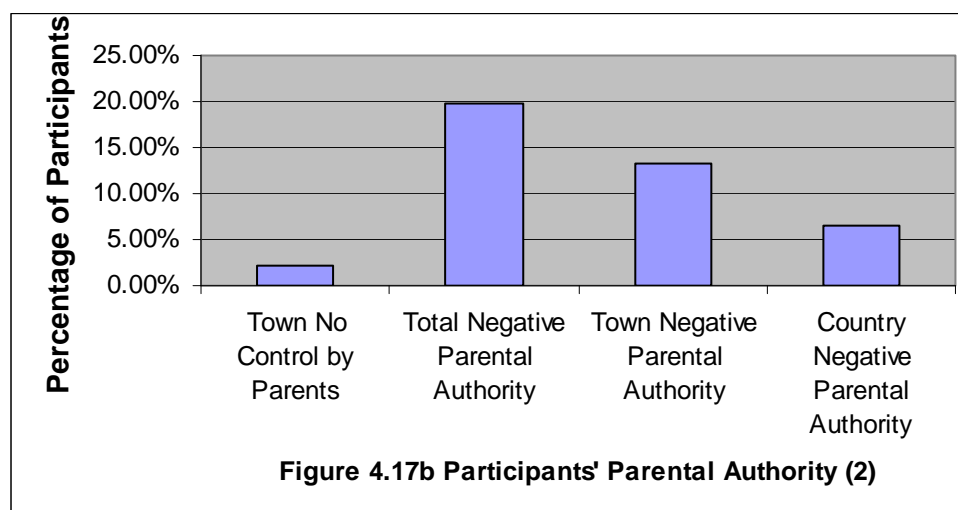


Twenty-one participants (21, 23.1%) commented on their mother’s level of authority in their lives. Twelve (12, 13.2%) of these participants were from the town and nine (9, 9.9%) from the country. Many of the comments regarding authority were also expanded with explanations regarding their mothers’ disciplinary influences. Four (4, 4.4%) of the twelve participants from the town emphasized that their mother was the only constant parent around them, because of divorce or father’s employment “Dad was away most of my childhood” and “Dad had the discipline role...but was mostly at work”, so they spent more time and had close proximity to her. Another group of four (4, 4.4%) participants from the country, made similar comments about their parents (See Figure 4.17 a).

Only five participants indicated that there was conflict in the relationships before a positive attitude was reached. There was also a group of eighteen participants (18, 19.8%), twelve (12, 13.2%) from towns and six (6, 6.6%) participants from the country, who were very negative in their responses about

the control their parents had over them. They wanted more understanding, less advice and more freedom. “I usually get the third degree...about alcohol”, confided one town participant. Both groups mentioned the emotions of anger and annoyance at the level of control they were experiencing. Only one participant, from a town, mentioned that her conscience, derived from “my religious beliefs”, was the source of her control.

Other personal controls included the participants’ sense of what was wrong, independence, making one’s own decisions and sibling favouritism. The fathers’ personalities made the participants feel that their mothers could be more authoritative. Comments such as “Dad was more laid back, so Mum had more authority” and “Dad did not have much authority” and stayed the “good guy”. Further comments explained the mothers’ level of authority and discipline compared to the fathers’ discipline and punishment, which was delegated to when “the father gets home”. Fathers always had “the final discipline”, while another participant felt that her father was always “doing [activities] with her brother”, so the authority came from her mother who told her “what to do and what not to do”.



One participant also remarked that her mother had more control, which caused her problems, and consequently she related to her father better. Not being a

“daddy’s girl” was important for another participant. One mother gave her daughter no alternatives but to comply with her authority. The country participants revealed other factors concerning the mother’s authority over them, because of the mothers’ more constant presence. One commented that this caused “more arguments and conflict” (See Fig.4.17b).

Another mentioned the influence of a stepfather in the family. He was a source of “fun” rather than authority. Her mother had had to make the rules and had “educated the children”. Two (2,2.2%) of the country participants spoke about respecting their mother’s authority. One mentioned accepting her mother’s decisions because “she does the things for the right reasons”. Another hated her mother at the time when authority was needed, but “did respect her because I knew I was wrong”. Being the eldest also, could be a problem as “I got blamed for things I didn’t do”.

4.2.2 Mothers’ Influences

Very few additional comments were made about the mother’s disciplinary approach. More contact with mothers, especially after divorce, put the mothers into this role. The most profound comments from the participants concerned were not about the level of authority in the participants’ lives, but about the influences these women had had on them. It was very encouraging to find that forty-two (42, 46.2%) participants in the survey commented on this influence. Of the forty-two responses, twenty-nine (29, 31.9%) were from the towns, while thirteen (13, 14.3%) were from country areas. Their replies could be analyzed into varying degrees of influence, but there was an overwhelming impression that the mothers had been a most positive force in the students’ lives.

The mothers each provided a firm basis for the participants’ lives, so this was the major feature of their contribution. The town females commented that

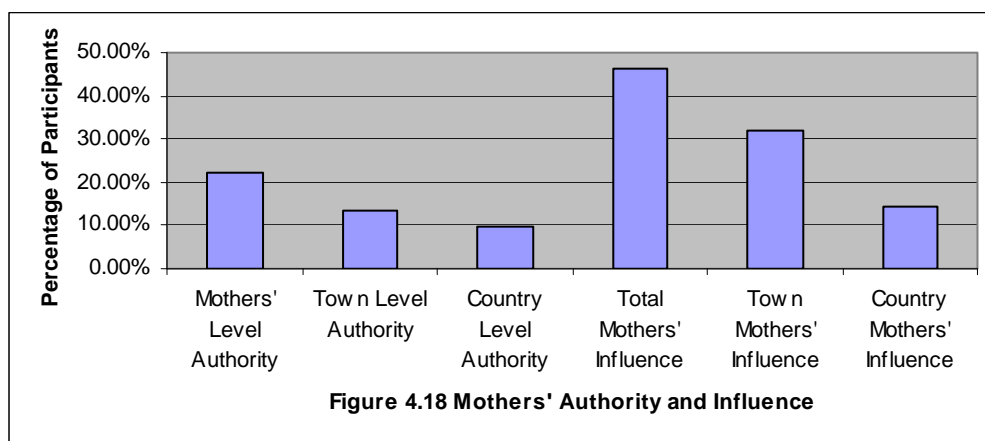
mothers had been influential in most aspects of their lives. Setting standards for social behaviour, solving problems and having correct attitudes to others were the positive factors. Transferring a sense of morality and values was important for other participants, one of whom commented that her mother was able to do this in a “non-lecturing and truthful manner”. Having good standards of behaviour and learning to respect (her) elders, were the attributes gained by another participant. Mothers were given accolades for “everything” in another two (2, 2.2%) participants’ lives, whilst a third mentioned that this influence extended to the way she acted publicly and what she actually spoke about. Another mentioned that her mother had taught her how to grow up, whilst another mentioned learning “right from wrong”.

The country participants wrote also about “moral influences” of the mothers, about learning right from wrong from them also and about being encouraged to be honest in all their activities. Much of the influence of the mothers of the town participants was possible, because the young women spent more time with them. Mothers were closer in proximity to their daughters, because of the work patterns of the fathers or because of divorce, so in both cases the fathers were absent.

Before the arrival of stepfathers, mothers were often the only parent in close proximity. If mothers worked at home, they were also able to be close to their daughters. One participant commented that she was pleased her mother was at home, when she came back from school and this was an important factor for her. Another town participant, who had once lived on a farm, commented that the influence of her mother was different to that of her father. Because of their farming lifestyle, the father influenced this participant as she was always engaged in outdoor activities with him, but she was also close to her mother in other ways. The country participants mentioned similar reasons for their mothers’ influences. The only difference mentioned by one participant

indicated that she could see her mother “at school every day”. Her mother was obviously an employee at that school.

Socialising the females became another positive effect of the mother’s influence on their daughters’ lives. The town participants mentioned being taught to be open-minded and being influenced regarding appropriate behaviour. The gender aspects of being a “girl” and the “good and the bad things about being a girl”, were the contributions from another mother. One mother’s happy nature influenced another participant to adopt this type of personality. From a broader perspective, another mother taught her daughter “to be a well-educated, sensible member of society”. Only one response from a country participant was positive in this analysis. This female commented on being taught about relationships by her mother.



The involvement of the mothers in their daughters’ lives was a crucial factor for many participants. Those from the town commented on their mothers being “there” when harassed by other students and when they needed caring and support. Sport played an important part in their lives and the town participants recorded the mothers’ involvement in these types of activities. Mothers looked after the girls the most and were “always there” when needed. Mothers were the first parent to be approached when needs arose. One participant commented on the contribution her mother made by showing “me how to do things”. Another confided that her mother had been a “great

support” for her because she had “disabilities”. Support and being the principal confidants for their daughters were other positive contributions. The participants needed to be able to discuss life as a female with their mothers and many were given that opportunity (See Fig.4.18).

4.2.3 Fathers’ Influences

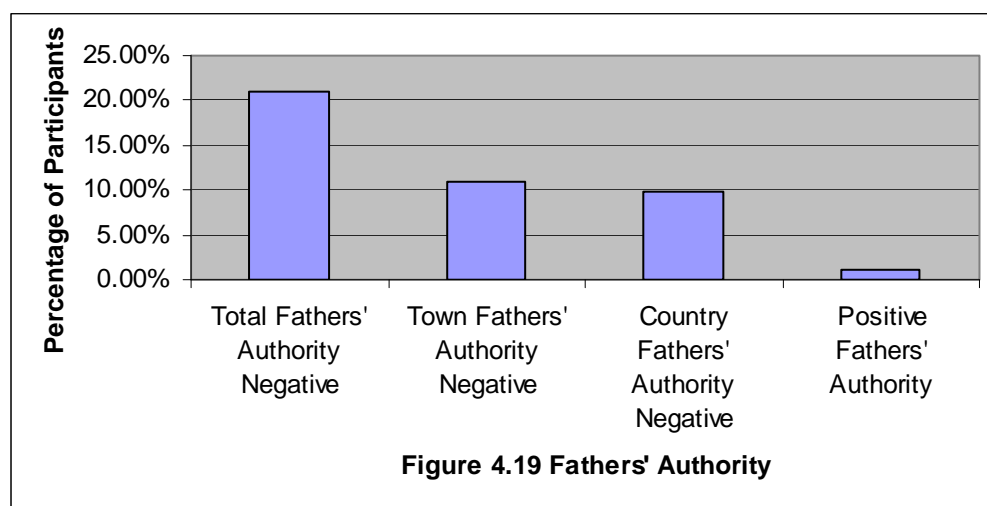
The general tenor about the fathers was not positive and was in direct contrast to the opinions of the mothers. The country girls had some varying comments about their fathers. One noted that her father by contrast was “a pig” in the way he treated her. The most distressing negative comment came from one town participant who had confessed to incest having occurred, possibly with her father and brothers. She indicated, “her life was hell...because of the mental and physical abuse and sexual abuse”. At the time of this survey (2002), she had also written “My Dad won’t look at me when I go to his work” and that she wanted to “have a body to myself” and “I don’t want to live”. Because of her mother’s refusal to acknowledge this student’s later difficulties and to arrange family counselling, the young woman commented that she had learnt from her family, particularly her mother, “how not to trust any or everyone, only myself”.

There were nineteen (19, 20.9%) participants who commented on the level of authority and discipline their fathers had exerted in their lives. Ten of these (10, 11%) were from the town and nine (9, 9.9%) were from the country. What could be seen as the traditional role, as the authority figure in the participants’ lives, was the role of the fathers discussed by the participants in this survey.

Only one town (1, 1.1%) participant commented that her father “did not show much authority” and that he “stayed the good guy” within the family. Another town participant mentioned that her mother used the father’s role as a

deterrent with the comment “wait until your father gets home”. Both groups were prepared to comment on the authoritative attitudes of particular fathers. One town participant mentioned that her father was always the one to “go off”. He also “doesn’t listen; he makes me upset”. Two (2, 2.2%) participants from the country had similar comments, one being that her father was in “every way bad” while the second explained that it was her father’s “sterner voice” which made her feel “that he had more authority” when she had done “something wrong”.

One participant each, from the town and country, wrote about actual corporal punishment in the form of “smacking me when I was naughty”, or a pat on the “ass”, while two from the country mentioned that their fathers gave out the “punishment” when it was deemed necessary. The town participant confided that her father’s inflexible characteristics had always had her “backed down” in arguments, as “I know he thinks he is right”. She had learnt to be more cautious in these conflict situations.



Other comments from the town participants focused on “Dad always [having] the final decision” and “growling” and “setting the rules”. Fathers were the cause of not being “able to do something”, according to the comments of one of the town participants. This type of behaviour by the fathers could be seen as being part of what could be called the traditional role of the male in the

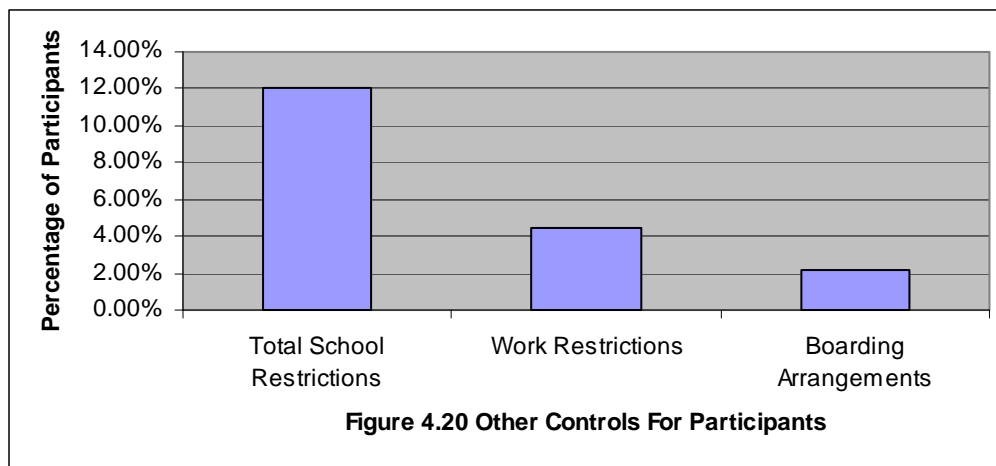
family, to keep the level of authority needed to prevent conflict with the children and to maintain the level of control over family matters. The participants did not appreciate this type of control in their lives and were strong in their comments about it (See Fig. 4.19).

There were three strong comments from the country participants regarding their father's ability to gain authority through "fear" and "intimidation". One father was "so tall and had a loud voice" while another father controlled by using "harsh words". The attitude to the fathers was a surprising revelation in this study.

4.2.4 Other Controls

Other controls on the participants in this survey included school restrictions with homework and school rules. There were eleven (11, 12.1%) percent with school restrictions, (4, 4.4%) who indicated that work restricted the control on their lives and only (2, 2.2%) who indicated that their boarding arrangements in either the school hostel, or in a private home reduced their freedom. One town participant, who was only sixteen, mentioned that "there are always the legal restrictions" and another from the country who was annoyed that "I am not 18 and an adult, [yet] I am still considered an adult when it comes to the prices of things". One participant, from the country, isolated "the speed limit" as a control, while another country student nominated Centrelink, (a Social Security Office). A personal control from a town participant was "my conscience and my standards and Bible-based beliefs". A similar remark from another town participant indicated that "I restrict myself to what I believe is right or wrong or dangerous".

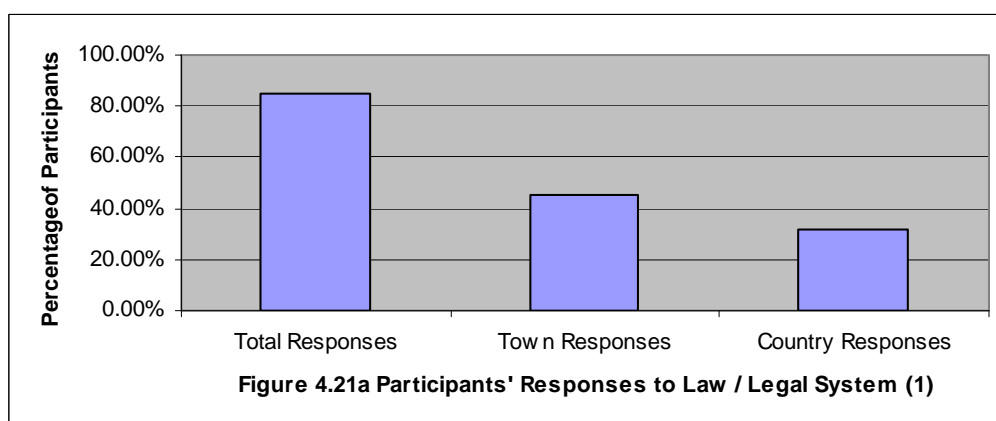
One town participant indicated that she was not permitted "to go out after dark". The control of a boy friend frustrated another town participant because "he doesn't let me do much" while the other from the country was controlled by her brother who was "worse than my parents". Another brother from the country was "fairly protective" of his sister. The most independent participant was from the town with her comment "I control what I do".



It was evident after these analyses that the female participants were very responsive to the control and authority their parents had over them. They appreciated the trust and advice given to them, particularly by their mothers. There was only conflict with particular fathers who were regarded and acted as the archetypical authority figures and with various other aspects of family, school and community controls. These participants resented the fact that their fathers were more traditional in their attitudes to females and restricted their freedom more (See Fig.4.20).

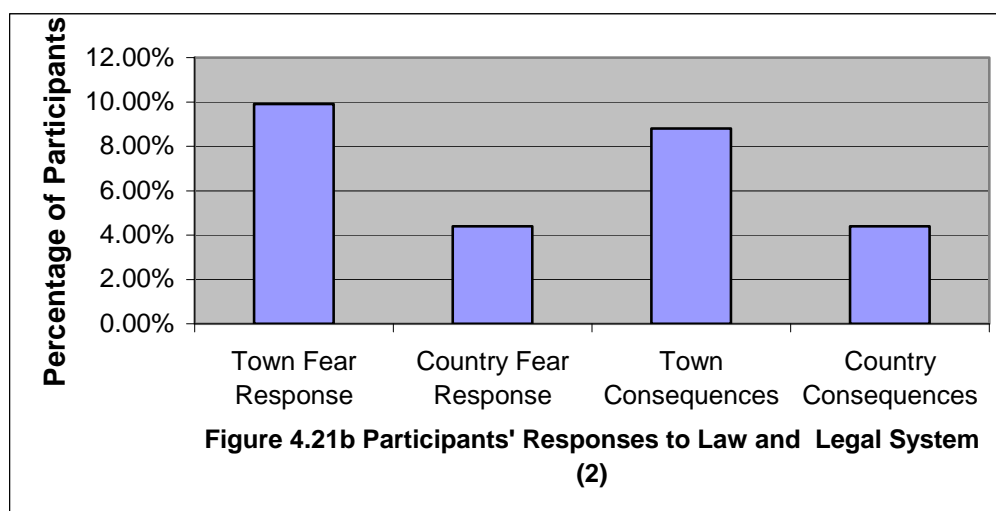
4.2.5 Attitudes to Law and the Legal System

There were seventy-seven (77, 84.7%) responses, forty-one (41, 45%) from the town, twenty-nine (29, 31.9%) from the country to the question regarding



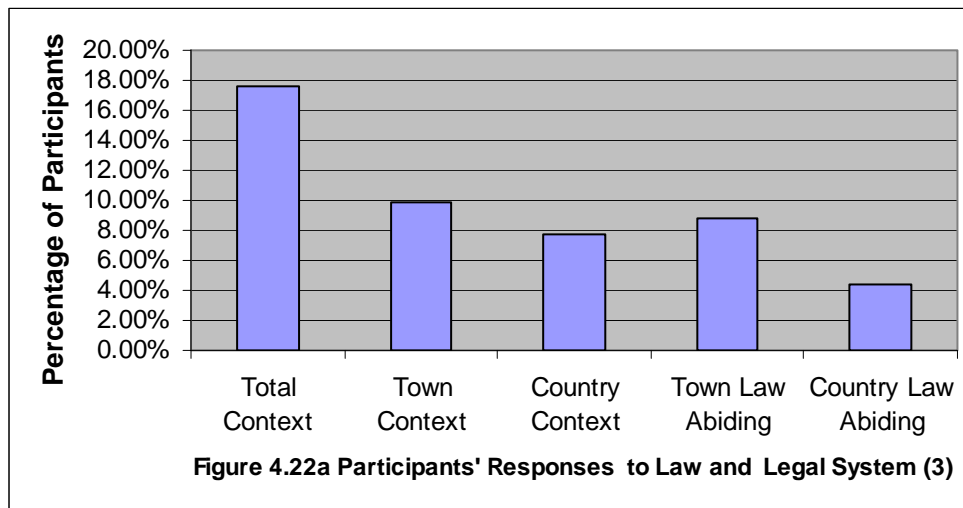
influences of the law and legal restrictions on the participants' risk taking activities (See Fig.4.21a).

The two biggest factors affecting their compliance with the legal system were at first fear, with thirteen (13,14.3%) participants, nine (9, 9.9%) from the town and four (4, 4.4%) from the country. The second factor was the possibility of any other extenuating consequences for twelve (12,13.2%) participants with eight (8, 8.8%) from the town, four (4, 4.4%) from the country occurring as a result of their involvement in risk taking practices. Another sixteen (16, 17.6%), nine (9, 9.9%) from the town, and seven (7, 7.7%) from the country indicated that the law and the legal system were sometimes a consideration, depending on the context. It is interesting that fear itself was the motivating factor for some participants and not a respect for the legal system in the first instance. However, it was gratifying to note that the any extenuating circumstances were a consideration and that these adolescents were mindful of the outcome when negative risk taking was being considered (See Fig.4.21b).



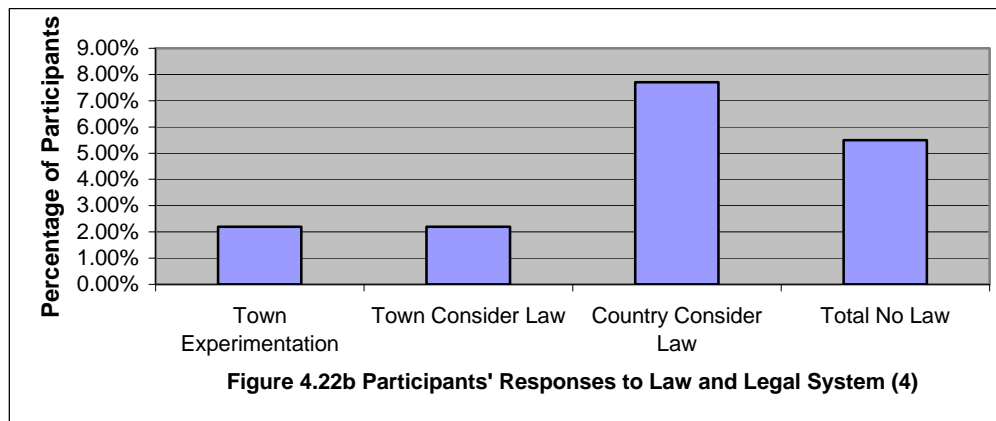
Two (2, 2.2%) town females contended that experimentation and exploration of new activities were the reasons for ignoring the legality of certain situations, because “sometimes teenagers like me want to explore” and the question of “Legality [is] often a contributing factor to the adrenalin and the fun”.

Another three (3, 3.3%) participants, one (1, 1.1%) from the town and two (2, 2.2%) from the country, felt their attitude depended on the situation, or on not being caught. One town participant wrote “I just figure that I won’t get caught doing anything illegal, so why should I stress about it” (See Fig 4.22a).



Twelve participants (12, 13.2%) eight (8, 8.8%) from the town and four (4, 4.4%) from the country indicated that they were very law abiding because “breaking the law is serious; it can ruin your life”. Another nine (9, 9.9%), two (2, 2.2%) from the town and seven (7, 7.7%) country participants responded very positively, indicating that they always considered these aspects. “It’s been made illegal for a reason; why break it?” (See Fig.4.22a)

Only five (5, 5.5%) indicated that they did not consider the law or the legal system and knew immediately that they would engage in the activities. As one wrote, “I don’t think that I’ll get caught, so I do it”. This participant showed a disregard for the legal aspects of her life, as did others in the survey (See Fig.4.22 b).



4.2.6 Changes in Parental Controls and Relationships

There were fifty-three (53, 58.3%) thirty-three (33, 36.3%) town participants and twenty (20, 22%) country participants who responded in a positive way about the changes, which had occurred in their relationships with their parents, and their control of their lives. They reported that there had been an improvement in the relationships with their parents, either on their part or as a result of the parents' attitudes. The participants' increased maturity was the essence of the main comments from eight (8, 8.8%) town participants and five (5, 5.5%) from the country, where the young women explained that they were "growing up", were "calming down" and could interact more with their parents. They also understood their parents better and were becoming "closer to them". Over-reacting to situations was now behind them. They looked at life from a more mature angle and they realized that their parents were not overly protective, just concerned about what was the best for them.

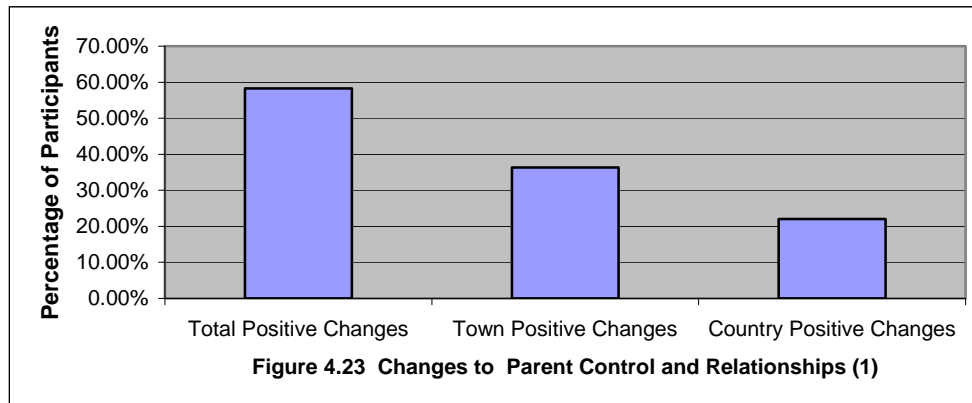
Equally important was the increased level of communication between the participants and their parents, with twelve (12, 13.2%) six (6, 6.6%) in both the town and country reporting on this aspect of their lives. Arguments and fights were fewer and the parents and young women talked to each other more about their problems and many other topics. Two town participants spoke about the increased contact they were having, one with both parents who lived in two

separate towns and one who was able “to have contact with a father”, a situation, which she had not had as a child. Generally the females spoke about their parents being there to help and “to support them”.

The increased independence of the participants was also evident in their responses with a total of eleven (11, 12.1%), eight (8, 8.8%) from the town and three (3, 3.3%) from the country. The town participants commented on their “greater levels of responsibility” and decision-making abilities. They were able to listen more and to make their own decisions. One town participant had changed dramatically from being unable to defend herself to taking a more active stand and “speaking out for her rights”. Another town participant noted that she had become more “adventurous” and another that she had gained “more freedom” from her parents.

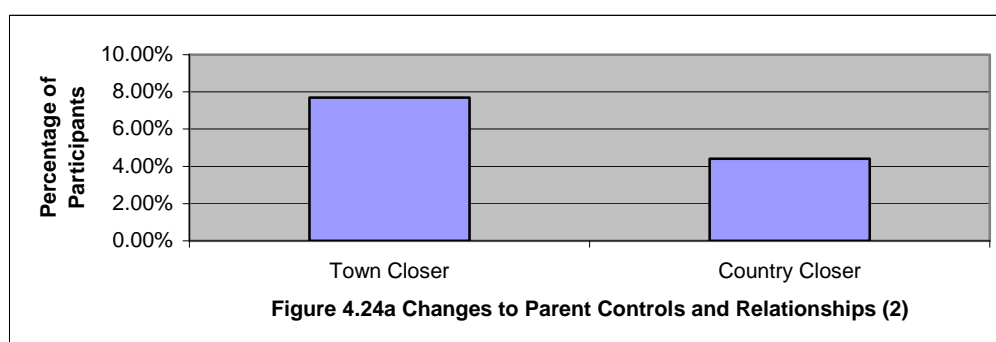
Six participants (6, 6.6%), four (4, 4.4%) from the town and two (2, 2.2%) from the country recognized that they were bonding in stronger ways, with one or both parents. One each, from the town and country, indicated that they had firmer relationships with their fathers, whilst the town participant also had noted that her relationship was worse with her mother. Respect and parental recognition of the young women’s talents was a key element of the new relationships. Another eleven (11, 12.1%) participants, (7, 7.7%) from the town and four (4, 4.4%) from the country indicated that they were now, in Grade 11, closer to their parents, particularly their fathers and additionally, one step father. One country participant even included the closeness she now had with her “siblings”. All these comments indicate that more than half of the participants in this survey were responding well to the control of parents and family life, so consequently the individual responses to their authority were most favourable. At this stage in their lives, the participants realized that they were being supported by their parents and family life and were prepared

to wait for their freedom from the controlling forces in their lives (See Fig.4.23).



The same positive outcome was not present for another twenty-two (22, 24.2%) participants, twelve (12, 13.2%) from the town and ten (10, 11%) from the country. Seven (7, 7.7%) from the town had lost the closeness with either both or one of their parents.

Four (4, 4.4%) of them were now closer to their fathers and were lesser in attachment to their mothers. One female complained that her parents “did not respect her”, whilst another blamed herself as she had lost contact with them because of her own activities.



Only one mentioned divorce as a contributing factor to losing the closeness with her mother. It was interesting that divorce did not appear as a difficulty

in the participants' lives, which gave the females more stability, at an important time in their lives (See Fig. 4.24a).

A further two (2, 2.2%) students from the town and one (1, 1.1%) from the country spoke of the difficulties with their relationships with their fathers. One from the town revealed that her father was not able to cope with her, if she "stated an opinion" or opposed him in any way. The other student from the town was the one who had revealed the incest in her family and that at the time of the survey (2001), she had given up confiding with her mother about anything, as her mother felt that she was selfish.

Adolescence had made a change to relationships for six (6, 6.6%) of the participants, one (1, 1.1%) from the town and five (5, 5.5%) from the country. One complained that her parents "did not respect her", whilst another blamed herself as she had lost contact with them because of her own activities.

Two of the country group wrote about not being as open and honest with their parents, whilst another one from this group felt that her mother was "unstable". One town participant and another one from the country group hinted that dramatic changes in adolescence had changed the parent/child dynamics.

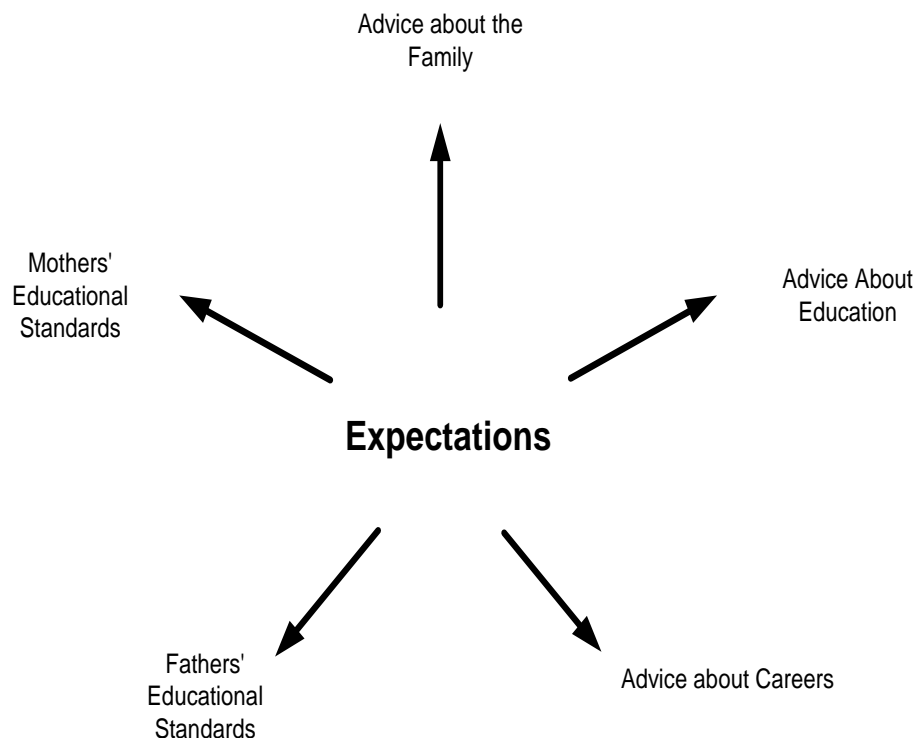
The last group of five (5, 5.5%) participants had negative responses, one (1, 1.1%) from the town and four (4, 4.4%) from the country, indicated that there was now "a lack of communication" with their parents, with most describing the lack of conversation with fathers, whilst one country participant expressed disappointment as "the support and encouragement" with her studies had now decreased. This latter aspect was disturbing, as the years at the Senior Secondary College demanded intensive study, so the students often needed assistance.

4.2.7 Summary of Research Objective 2

The participants' attitudes to the law and the legal system appeared to be minimal. Other factors such as the fear of dire "consequences" or the thrill of experimentation and the exploration of new activities overrode the legal implications of the risk taking activities. However, it was encouraging that the positive comments about parental relationships were more than double the negative ones, providing evidence that adolescent and parent relationships do change, with the maturity of the young participants and with improved communication between the two groups, providing a firm basis for the improvements.

4.3 Research Objective 3

Diagram 4.3: The Type of Expectations Placed on the Participants



RO3. This objective was to ascertain the type of expectations, placed on adolescent participants by themselves, the family, their schools and the community in their earlier lives

For the analysis of this section the responses to the questions regarding advice on future family, education and careers were analysed along with the mothers' educational standards to gauge improved or lesser outcomes. For this information see the following diagram (See Diagram 4. 3).

4.3.1 Family Expectations

Family expectations could have influenced these young participants in several ways, to have or have not, families of their own or to marry or not marry. However, these influences will be difficult to gauge as the participants misinterpreted, in some respects, the question in the survey, regarding their families' expectations of them in relationship to marriage and children. Whilst the intention had been for the females to record their own expectations about marriage and children with reference to their parents' advice, they had, in many instances, revealed their families' expectations within their current family situation and not those in the future.

There were nineteen (19, 20.9 %) participants, eleven (11, 12.1%) from the town and eight (8, 8.8%) from the country, who revealed this information. Respect was highly regarded by the families, as were relationships within the home. "Staying close" to family members, "being pleasant", "showing affection" and helping and caring for them were the qualities emphasised. Teamwork within the family and equality amongst its members were admired, as was supporting family members and enjoying duties, all of which had to be performed for the family unit. These duties included "attendance at family functions" and "visiting grandparents". One town mother urged her daughter to stay close to her siblings throughout her life, whilst another town

participant disclosed that her family wanted her to know that she was a loved member of the family unit.

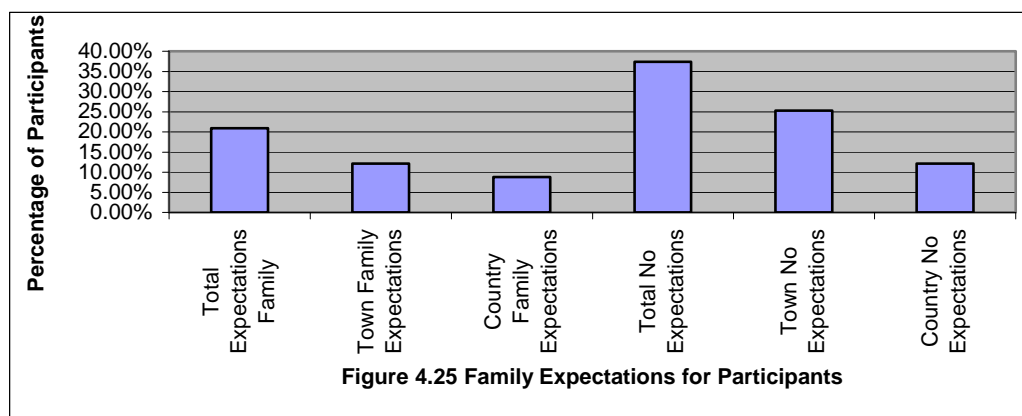
Useful advice was offered to another group of participants, twelve (12, 13.2%) in all, with eleven (11, 12.1%) from the town and only one (1, 1.1%) from the country group. The pursuit of happiness was the main advice offered to the participants, together with respecting one's family members and what they had gained or achieved.

Other values were evident in this section. Twelve (12, 13.2%) from the town and eight (8, 8.8%) from the country explained the nature of one of these expectations. "Respect", already mentioned, was highly regarded by these families, as was the actual quality of the relationships within the family. The emphasis was placed upon teamwork within the family and equality amongst its members was admired as was supporting the family members and enjoying the duties, which had to be performed, for the family unit.

Further advice was offered to another group of participants, twelve (12, 13.2%) in total, with eleven (11, 12.1%) from the town and only one (1, 1.1%) from the country group. The pursuit of happiness was the main advice offered to these participants. The need for young women to be friendly and a good person were two attributes deemed important for the one country participant. Having a husband and family, was the advice for only two participants, both from the town group, whilst one from the country was given the definite advice that she should not have children. Another participant from the town was urged to find a husband who treated her equally. Whilst this section had not been answered in the intended way and there had been a large opportunity missed for the thirty-four (34, 37.4%) who had had no expectations placed on them, the participants had been able to recognise a selection of very

worthwhile attributes and advice useful in their search for their own “sense of identity” (See Fig.4.25).

Two participants (2, 2.2%,) one each from the town and the country were cautioned not to marry, or have children until either they were ready, or until they had established a good career. The one from the town was told not to marry and the one from the country was told not to have children, both for the reasons stated above.

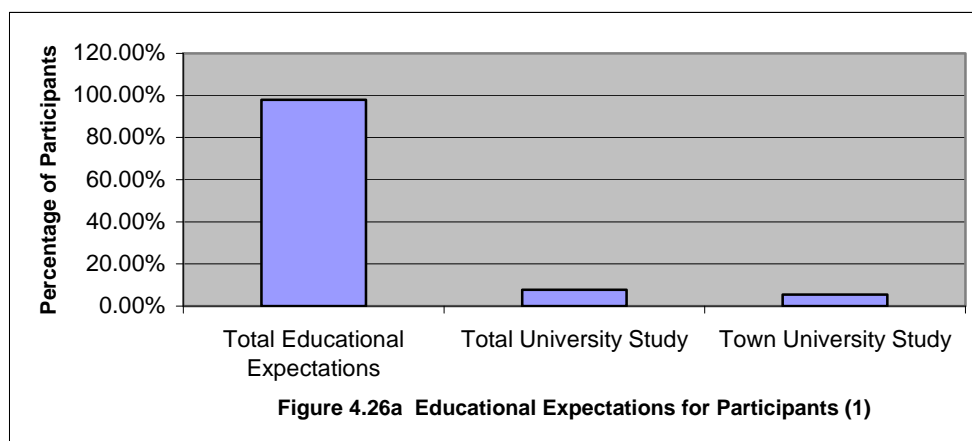


Another participant commented that she had been alienated from her family and another felt that, as the eldest, she been treated unfairly as she was often blamed for “things she didn’t do”. Consequently she harboured resentment towards her siblings. It was surprising, that of the seventy-five (75, 82.5%) participants who had responded to this section of the survey, that thirty-four (34, 37.4%), of the participants indicated that there had been no parental expectations placed on them, concerning family, when they had been younger.

4.3.2 Educational Expectations

The following analyses of the responses would prove that the expectations placed on education were more about personal attitudes to education, but were still more specific than those already expressed for families and those which are discussed later, for careers.

The expectations towards the females' education were more challenging than those given so far regarding their future family lives. Eighty-nine participants (89, 97.9%) recorded the educational expectations placed upon them by their parents and family members. There were multiple facets in their answers and analyses of them proved to be more complex and more difficult to reduce to percentages. Paramount in the advice was the emphasis on the standards to be attained by the young women. Most of these standards were general in nature without emphasising particular learning or career paths. Expressions such as achieving a “decent” or “good” education and in other cases to do one’s “best” or to “excel” or “to gain the highest marks possible” were evident in the participants' responses. Other comments urged the females to “go all the way” or “to go as far as you can”. Further comments included “trying hard” or “being exceptional”.



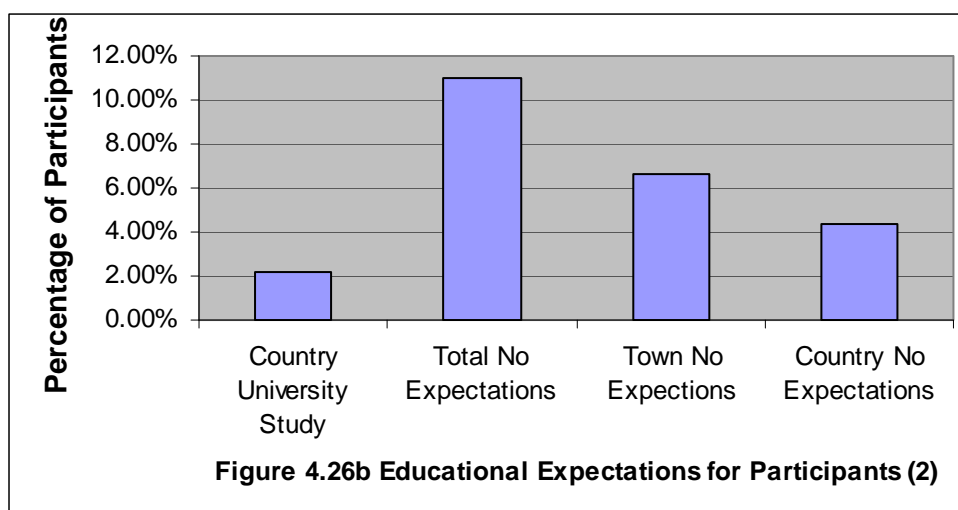
University study was only emphasised with seven (7, 7.7%) of the participants - five (5, 5.5%) from the town and two (2, 2.2%) from the country. Rather it was having a work ethic, which was the second most important aspect of the expectations, placed on the females. Again, working at their best level was the focus, as was working hard and striving to do their best. Being “happy” was the advice given to one country participant. One town female was encouraged to enjoy her school experiences whilst another was urged to learn “to control

her temper”. This particular student was the one mentioned earlier who had been subjected to incest during her childhood, with no assistance from her mother to prevent this occurring, so it is not surprising to sense that her temper may have been well founded (See Fig.4.26a).

Achievement was only discussed in general terms from the revelations of five (5, 5.5%) town participants with comments such as “do as well as possible” and “caring for one’s future”. Only one set of the town parents were recorded as gaining pleasure from seeing their children “achieving well”, quite surprising for the level of aspirations and achievements of the participants.

Another set of professional town parents influenced their daughter by being very good role models, in that they created an academic environment for her, whereas a country participant had had a negative reaction to her parents’ demands for her education as they had been and were still “too pushy for good marks”.

A group of ten (10, 11%) participants, six (6, 6.6%) from the town and four (4, 4.4%) from the country were not given any expectations regarding their education which was unfortunate as it forms a significant number missing out on this valuable input into their future careers and life choices.



Whilst most of the above disclosures can be seen in a very favourable light and would have been valuable for these young women in their formative years, the very general nature of them demonstrates the loss of planning opportunities which could have been afforded these women.

However, all had not failed for these young females as they were still in a college setting (completing this survey) and studying at Year 11 level. They had progressed further than the mandatory level of Year 10, indicating their heightened sense of identity and purpose. The parents of these females may not have had the opportunities to study at the same levels as their daughters, and may have found success in other pathways, hence the lack of advice which could have been given (See Fig.4.26b).

4.3.2.1 Parents' Educational Levels

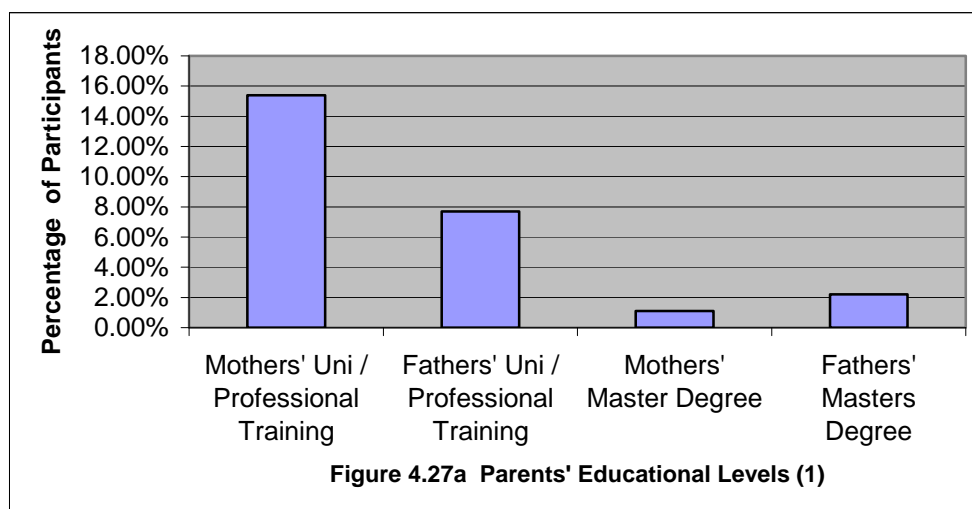
At this point the levels of education achieved by the mothers should be considered to gauge whether female parental role models had established patterns of educational achievement. The number listed under University education totalled fourteen (14, 15.4%) participants, with five (5, 5.5%) from the town and nine (9, 9.9%) from the country. One of these, a mother from the town, had begun her Master's Degree.

There was evidence that the mothers had, in the majority, completed Secondary School education up to Grade 10 level, with a total of thirty-eight (38, 41.8%), twenty-three (23, 25.3%) from the town and fifteen (15, 16.5%) from the country. Only nine (9, 9.9%) women had had further professional or skilled training, seven from the town (7, 7.7%) and two (2, 2.2%) from the country. This additional education had been mostly done in Teachers' Colleges (one town and one country mother) or TAFE (Technical and Further Education), with four (4, 4.4%) town participants and two (2, 2.2%) country participants. One mother from the country had studied at both a Teachers'

College for a year and then TAFE and another from the town had completed nursing training.

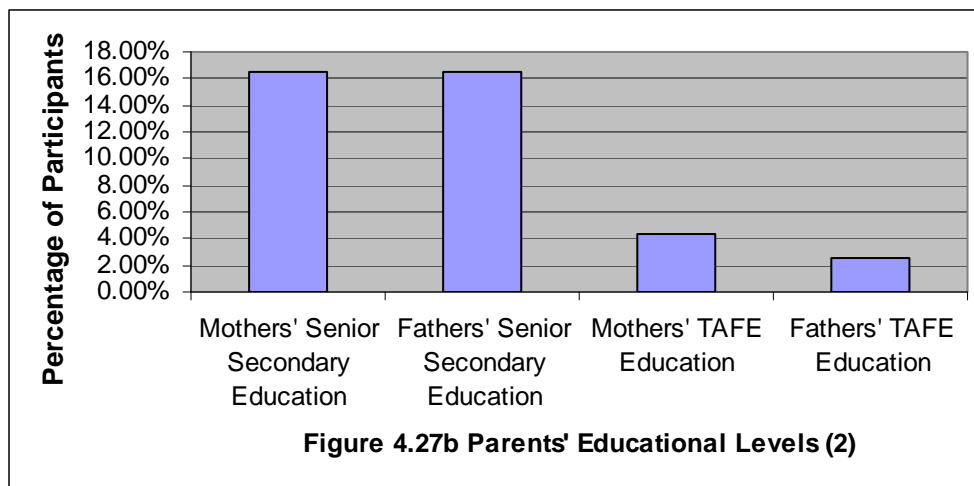
Only two mothers had attended school until Grade 11, one each from the town and country whilst six (6, 6.6%) from the town and one (1, 1.1%) from the country had completed Grade 12. Two additional town mothers were recorded as having attended High School, but no duration or class level was listed.

A group of thirteen (13, 14.3%) mothers, eleven (11, 12.1%) from the town and two (2, 2.2%) from the country had only had education to the Grade 9 level, with another town mother attending until Grade 7 and one to Grade 6. Four (4, 4.4%) participants from the town and one (1, 1.1%) from the country did not know their mothers' educational levels (See Fig.4.27a).

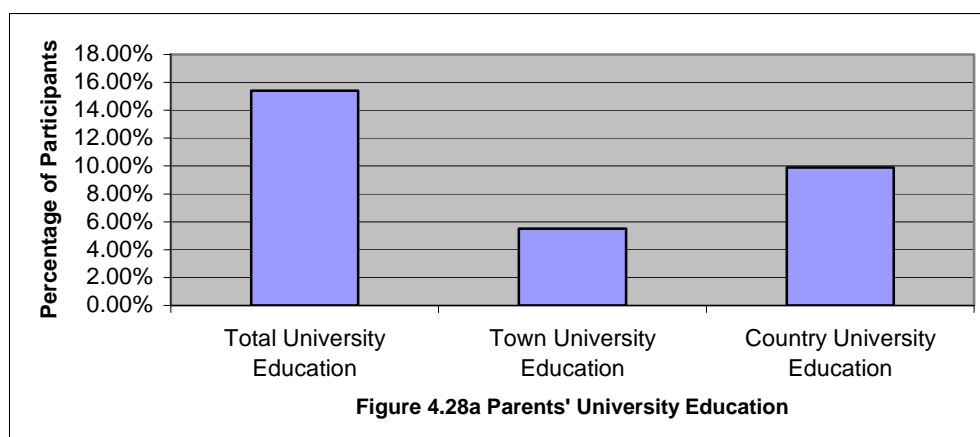


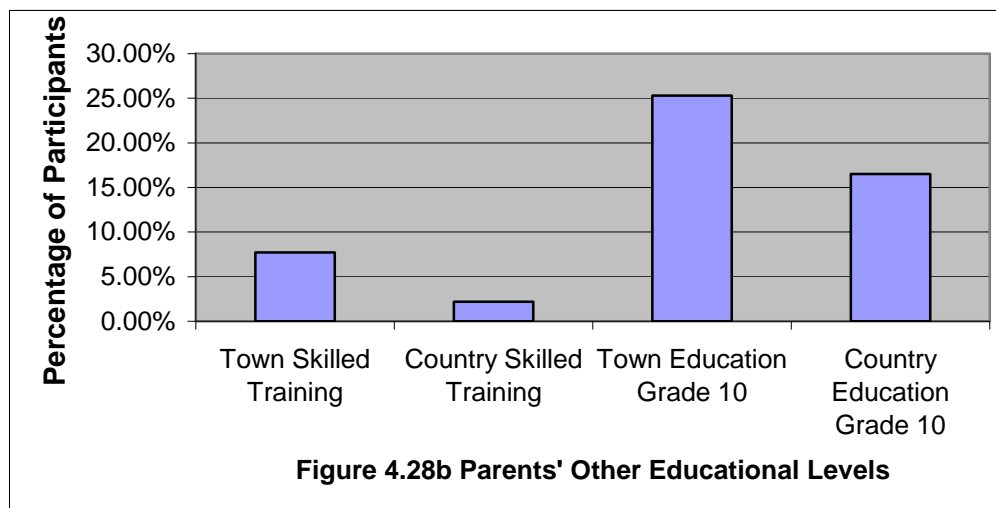
The fathers' educational levels were very similar, the mothers ahead with fourteen (14, 15.4%), compared to seven (7, 7.7%) of the fathers, having professional university training. However, two of the fathers and only one mother had studied for Masters' Degrees.

The lowest level of education for the mothers was one at Grade 6 (the end of Primary education) and for the fathers, one at Grade 7 (the beginning of Secondary education) (See Fig.4.27 b).



Fifteen mothers and fifteen fathers (15, 16.5%) each had completed their education up to the Senior Secondary level, which was the same stage their daughters were reaching in their studies, at the time of the survey for this research. Five mothers (5, 5.5%) and three fathers (3, 3.3%) were recorded as having TAFE (technical) training. The participants' aims were much higher than those which most of their parents had achieved, but this may have been not only their strong sense of self, but because of the fact that there were now more opportunities for them to achieve their goals (See Fig.4.28a; Fig.4.28b).





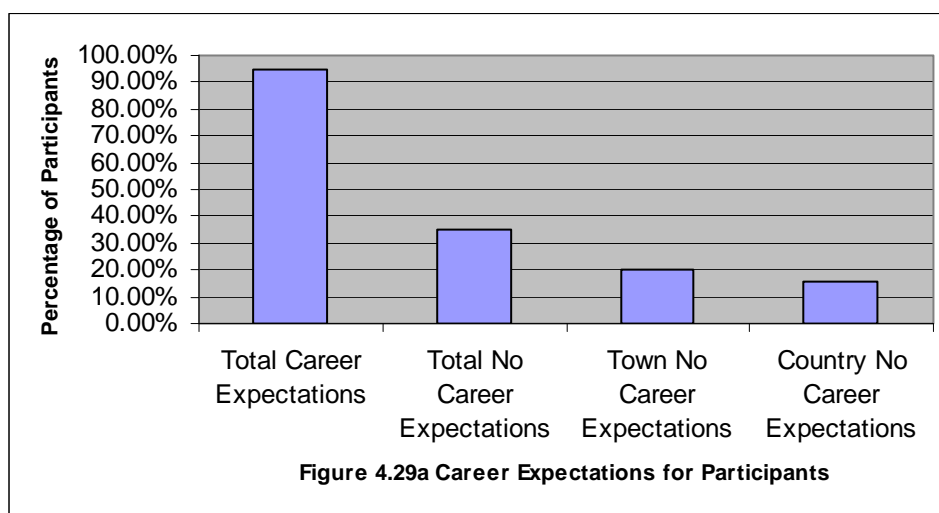
4.3.3 Career Expectations

When the expectations about careers were analysed, there were only five students who had omitted answering this section, leaving eighty-six responses (86, 94.6%). From this number there were thirty-two participants (32, 35.2%) eighteen (18, 19.8%) from the town group and fourteen (14, 15.4%) from the country who had had no expectations placed on them regarding career when young. There were multiple answers in each of the sections where expectations were revealed, again making it difficult to relate all of them to the total number in the survey as percentages. The career advice was, as with the family advice, quite varied, but influential for the young women's lives.

Choosing a stable career, was the most prevalent advice given to the participants. Implicit with these revelations was the concept that there should be a future for them within their careers. Several parents offered career choices such as being a teacher or childcare worker or to enter the armed forces or the navy. One participant from the country commented that her parents would have been disappointed if she had not been responsible and chosen a career. Being a "check out chick" (Supermarket cashier) would not have been their aim for her!!

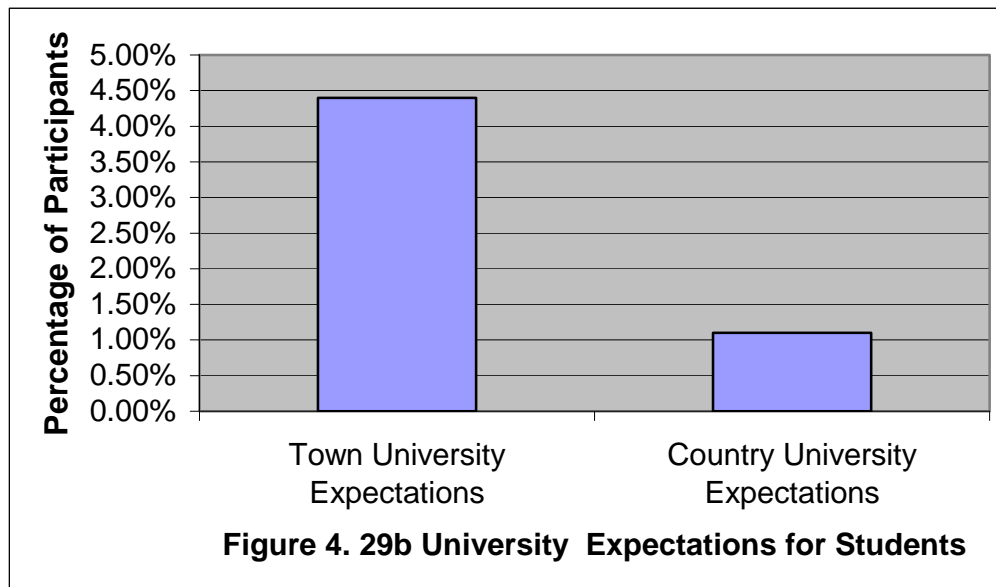
Ambition and success were emphasised by another group of parents. The participants in this group were encouraged to choose their own pathways as far as careers were concerned. These participants were advised to choose careers that they “liked” and the professions or occupations which they would find to be “interesting”. Additionally they were encouraged to keep their options open so that they could find the careers most suited to them.

University study only appeared five times with four (4, 4.4%) responses from the town and one (1, 1.1%) from the country in the list of career expectations. Only one other participant was given a choice of whether she would go onto tertiary study. Another admitted that she had rebelled against the University advice and had already decided that she wanted non-professional work. Coupled with the expectations of University education, came the added expectation that the participants would work very diligently and do their “best at school”. This advice did not appear to go any further with clear pathways for the participants to reach higher education levels (See Fig. 4.29a).



Another expectation from another group of parents indicated that finding a good job and hopefully a “good” or even a “high salary” should be their aim. Being happy and seeking happiness had fourteen responses (14, 15.4%) and underpinned many career choices and expectations.

Parents wanted their daughters to seek “enjoyment” in a career, which in turn, would lead them “to love their chosen occupation”. Two (2, 2.2%) participants were influenced by their parents’ advice to have the correct attitude to career selection and to take this matter seriously.



Only two students (2, 2.2%), both from the town, had negative responses. One parent wanted “too much” by suggesting a University career for her, whilst the other had had a teacher who had disheartened her with derogatory remarks, indicating that she would never succeed and that the only career destiny for her would be “to find a rich husband”. Other than that she would never “amount to anything”.

It was disappointing that a parent and a teacher could have the power to create such negative responses from these participants. In Tasmania there is always the need to retain students in schools until they reach Grade 12 and positive comments are more beneficial (See Fig.4.29 b).

4.3.4 Family Expectations

There were mixed levels of expectations placed on the participants regarding family, education and careers in the future. The question regarding families

was misinterpreted and was answered from the participants' situation at the time of the survey. In spite of this the young women were given very worthwhile expectations about how to treat their family members, all of which would serve as good advice in the future. Only a few of the mothers had reached high levels of education and training, but already these participants had been influenced to proceed further with all of them being at the Grade 11 level when completing the questionnaire, much improved from their mothers' experiences. There were large gaps in the advice for many regarding choices in marriage, family and careers, with lesser omissions in educational expectations. There was much to influence them, but many opportunities had been missed.

4.3.5 Summary of Expectations

There were mixed levels of expectations placed on the participants regarding family, education and careers in the future. The question regarding families was misinterpreted and was answered from the context of the participants' situation at the time of the survey. In spite of this, the young women were given very worthwhile expectations about how to treat their family members, all of which would serve as good advice in the future. Only a few of the mothers had reached high levels of education and training, but already these participants had been influenced to proceed further, with all of them being at the Grade 11 level when completing the questionnaire, much improved from their mothers' experiences. There were large gaps in the advice for many regarding marriage, family and careers, with lesser omissions with educational expectations. There was much to influence them, but many opportunities had been missed. In spite of the positive influences outlined in this section, the participants were engaged in several risk taking activities, namely alcohol use

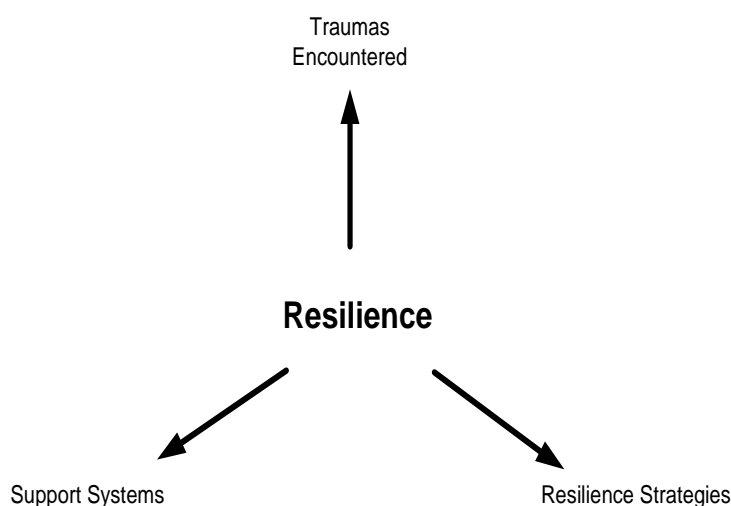
and abuse, unprotected sexual activity and the use of marijuana, at levels considered unacceptable.

4.4 Research Objective 4

RO4. To determine the amount of resilience to adversity in the adolescents' lives.

The three categories analysed for this objective focused on trauma, the females' resilience and their support systems (See Diagram 4.4).

Diagram 4.4: The Factors Contributing to Resilience of the Participants

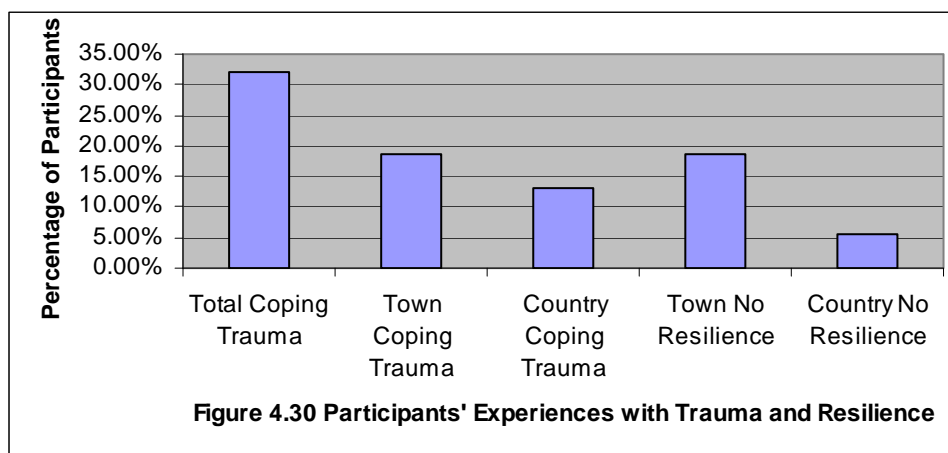


4.4.1 Trauma Problems and Solutions

The problems experienced by the participants involved parental cancer, death of grandparents, parents and friends, attempted suicides, broken relationships and divorce, remarriage of parents and personal illness and depression. There were twenty-nine (29, 31.9%) of the total survey group, seventeen (17, 18.7%) participants from the town group and twelve (12, 13.2%) from the country who indicated that they had coped well with the traumas in their lives. They had done this mainly by “talking” through their grief and problems with

the “support” of family members and friends. Other methods had involved “writing about their problems”, “putting more effort into their studies” using “positive thinking” and “religious teachings”. The philosophical strategies of “getting on with life”, “coping day by day”, “getting over it” and “pulling through” assisted several of the females. “Grieving” and “taking time” were also mentioned, as was the reality of the trauma continuing longer than desired.

On the negative side of facing trauma with no resilience, seventeen participants (17, 18.7%) from the town and five (5, 5.5%) from the country, experienced problems, so they kept to themselves, suffering depression, nervous breakdowns, suicidal attempts and anorexia. A lack of people to talk to and to trust exacerbated their problem.



The remaining group of forty (40, 44%) participants had either no trauma in their lives or had preferred to not answer this question. Whilst a small percentage of participants had not had resilience, it was interesting to also note that the “storm and stress” of adolescence (Hall, 1904) had not overtaken the whole group of participants. It was also interesting that the participants

had seen the value in utilizing many methods to overcome the effects of traumas in their lives. An asset in the coping strategies needed in traumatic situations was the value of friends (See Fig.4.30).

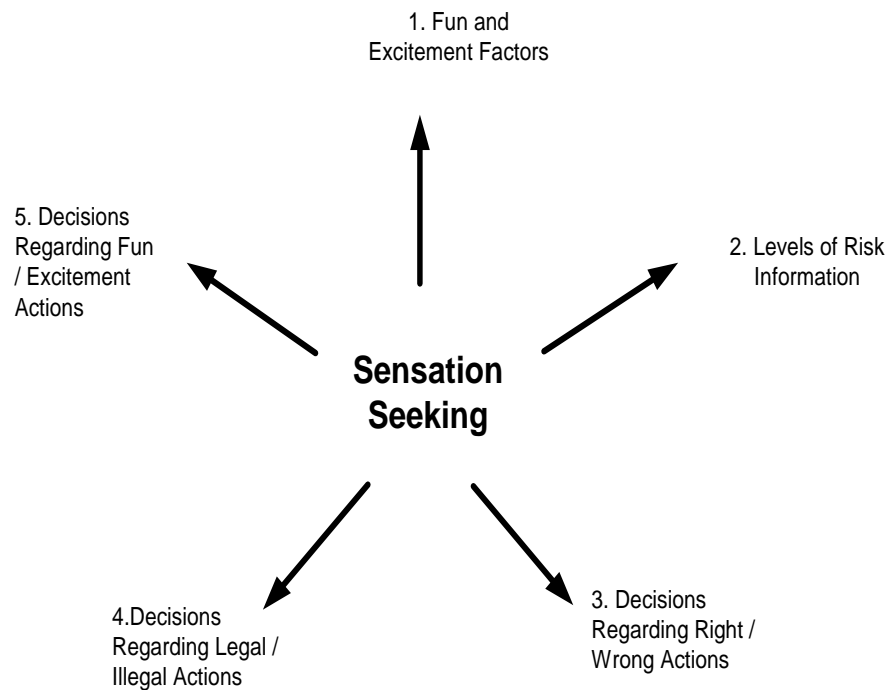
4.5 Research Objective 5

RO5. To analyse the need to “sensation seek” in the lives of adolescent females and the perceptions of their risk taking activities.

It was evident that there was a need to “sensation-seek” in the lives of adolescent girls. Their knowledge about and perceptions of risk taking activities were the major concerns in this section of this chapter. The categories analysed were especially directed to the risk choices being solely for fun and excitement. Underlying the search for answers here, was the question as to whether religion would prove to be a mitigating factor. This section also relied on the answers to the questions about whether to do something risky, if it were right or wrong, risky or dangerous or legal or illegal.

Without the curbing nature of religious beliefs, as outlined in the Literature Chapter, these female participants had had only their own sense of right and wrong to guide them in the choices of negative risk taking activities. It is a concern that the concept of “fun” is more important than their health and safety and their concern for others in many instances. Nearly a quarter of the participants indicated religious affiliations with another quarter wondering about this aspect of their lives, but risk taking still occurred. With a more relaxed social structure in Australia, the age for gaining personal freedom is becoming lower and the desire for risk taking appears to be increasing with that freedom.

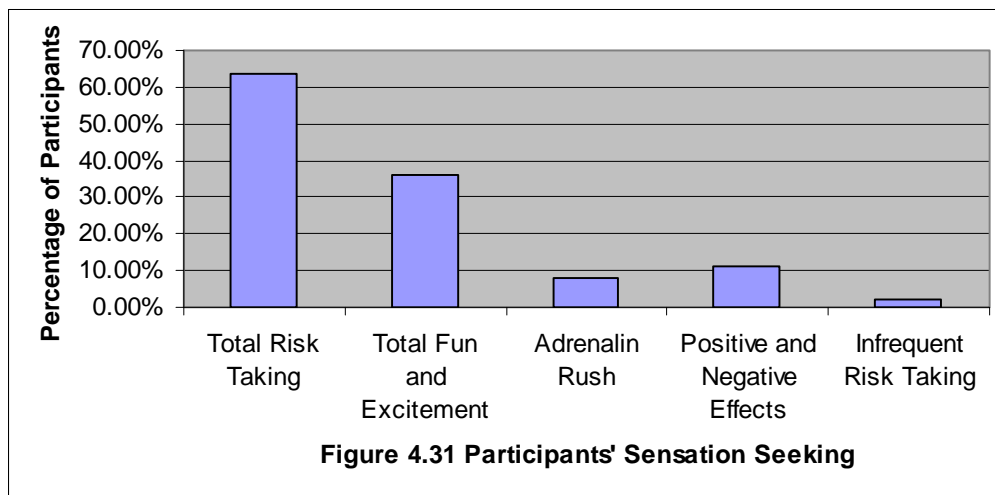
Diagram 4.5: The Factors Involved in "Sensation Seeking" by Participants



4.5.1 Sensation Seeking

The responses made by the females, regarding their participation in risk taking, indicated that “sensation seeking” in the form of fun and excitement was the major reason for choosing these activities. Of the fifty-eight (58, 63.8%) participants who replied to this aspect, thirty-three (33, 36.3%) indicated that these factors were the only reason for their participation (See Fig. 4.31).

Some of the qualifying statements included the facts that becoming “drunk” reduced one’s inhibitions and that “seeing others participating” created curiosity and this led to the initial involvement. For a few participants who found particular activities lacking in fun, there was a tendency to try even more “dangerous” activities to create the desired levels of fun and excitement. This “sensation seeking” created the credibility for the activity and assisted some of the participants with their decisions. Thinking through the experience was not a factor in their decision- making, but simply the “fun” aspect.



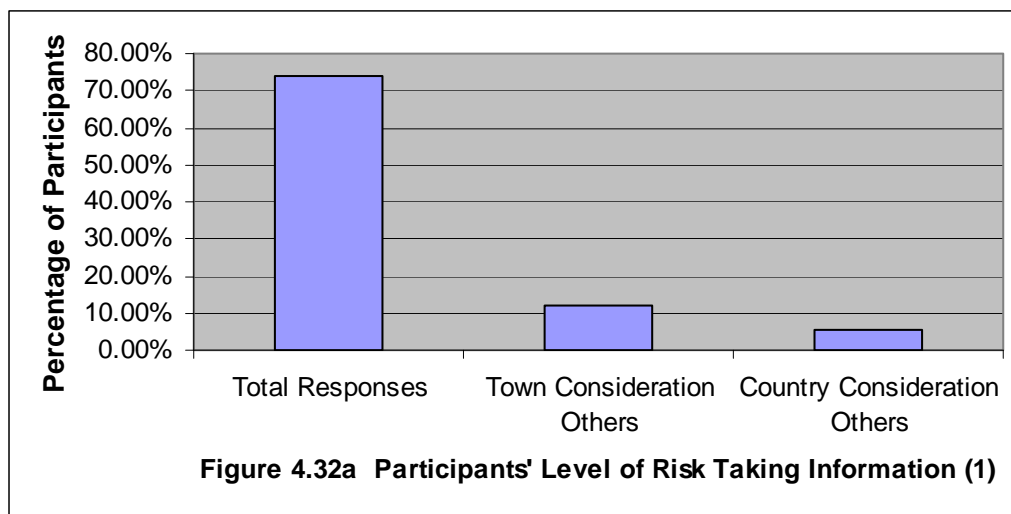
A smaller group of seven females (7, 7.7%) indicated that the “adrenalin” rush and “buzz” were the main considerations involved in “fun” activities. Even if these risky behaviours were considered “wrong”, there was a greater incentive to participate in them. Another group of ten (10, 11%) indicated that they would weigh up the positive and negative aspects of the risk taking activities or not trust others’ judgements, while some indicated that they would “consider others” and the possibility of being “in trouble”. Only two (2, 2.2%) indicated that they only participated in risk taking for “sensation seeking” sometimes, because often the activity was not worthwhile.

It is evident from these revelations that “sensation seeking” is the prime reason for the females’ engagement with risk taking activities. The legal system and balancing right and wrong were not the preferred choices for the participants. In this respect the participants complied with the literature background for this study where adolescents are considered keen to pursue a hedonistic lifestyle.

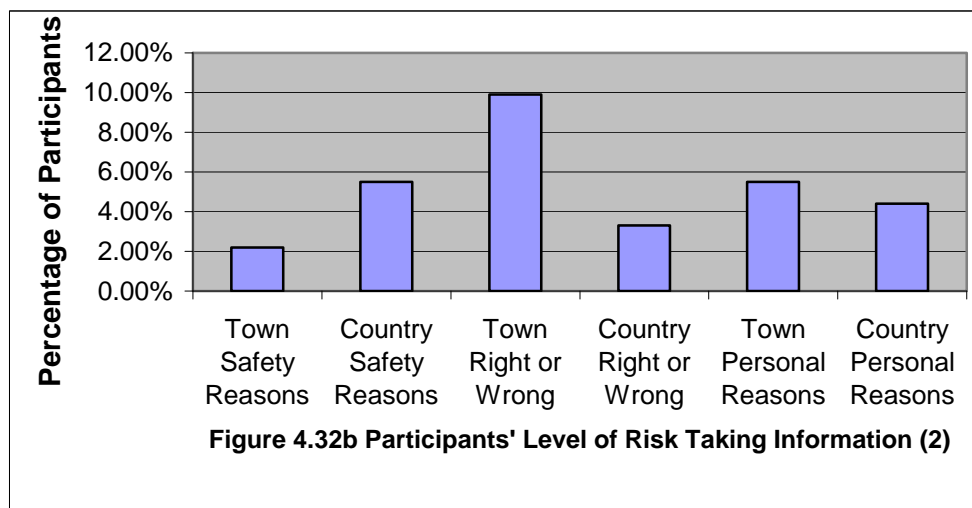
4.5.2 Level of Information

It was quite alarming to discover that from the sixty-seven (67, 73.7%) participants who offered responses to this question, only one mentioned the possibility of “death” being a result of her risk taking activities. There was no

other reference to any of the health implications that their risk taking activities may cause in the future.



Significantly, there were sixteen, eleven (11, 12.1%) town and five (5, 5.5%) country participants who argued that their risk taking was checked against the fact as to whether it would hurt or affect others or themselves, while another seven (7, 7.7%), two (2, 2.2%) town and five (5, 5.5%) from the country considered the levels of safety, danger or trouble inherent in the activities (See Fig.4.32a).



Another nine participants, five (5, 5.5%) from the town and four (4, 4.4%) from the country looked at the consequences of their actions, whilst another twelve (12, 13.2%), nine (9, 9.9%) from the town and three (3, 3.3%) from the

country, considered whether the activities were right or wrong. A further nine participants, five (5, 5.5%) from the town and four (4.4%) country participants, gave personal reasons such as valuing oneself, not wanting to have regrets and not wanting to “numb consciences” (See Fig. 4.32b).

4.5.3 Attitudes to Risk Taking

For those who indicated that they wanted to have the experiences of risk taking activities, they commented again on the “fun and excitement” aspect of the risk taking. Others put curbs on certain aspects of risk taking such as drinking to excess, but sometimes approved of smoking. Some participants hated what they were doing, but still continued, even when they felt the activity was wrong, because they liked experimenting. A few participants felt that they knew the consequences or risk levels of their activities and therefore were confident with their decisions.

It is surprising, considering the females’ very confident “sense of self” and their high regard for education and the opportunities available for their future development, that they were not more fully conscious about their health and the consequences of their actions. There was some curbing of their behavior, using fear and respect for others, but fun, excitement and experimentation superceded these and the young women remained confident that they would escape the dangers of their risk taking activities. None of them confided any details about accidents which may have occurred in their lives.

4.6 Conclusion

There were many positive features disclosed in the analyses of the five main objectives set for this thesis. The adolescent participants had a very strong “sense” of identity, had little negative peer group pressure, stable families and most lived in the presence of siblings. Their mothers were very instrumental in supporting and guiding their daughters. There were many expectations

placed on them by the families, schools and community, but these were often of a general nature and were not sufficient in many particular instances, especially regarding families and child rearing. The participants' aspirations were very high and education was seen to be most advantageous for a successful future. The response to trauma had demonstrated a high degree of resilience and the availability of support from family and friends.

On the negative side they had not had total support from their fathers whose role was often being the authoritarian one. There was little regard for the law and the legal system when negative risky activities were being undertaken and the information regarding their health and risk dangers was limited. Fun and excitement were the key ingredients for risky behaviours. The country participants had lesser ambitions to study at Year 12 level and were lower in aspirations for most educational categories, but with underlying reasons, such as distance from educational institutions or financial backing. Overall, the participants were anxious for adults to understand and to trust them more.

In Chapter 5 more qualitative and quantitative results will be given from the SPSS computer programme. The quantitative will focus on Crosstabulations, T Tests and ANOVA results. Chapter 6 will be dedicated to the findings from the Interviews with the School Administrators, Teachers and Parents. Chapter 7 will discuss and analyse the findings from the Australian Government and State policies on alcohol, drugs and sexual information, whilst Chapter 8 will reflect upon and summarise all the findings from the research.

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**PART 2****5.0 Introduction**

This Chapter will be dedicated to discussing more sections of the qualitative and the quantitative findings from the research on Female Adolescence and Risk Taking. Both quantitative and qualitative research employ data, which refer to numbers, but quantitative data are “separate from their collection and the values of their collectors” (Scott & Usher, 1996, p. 54). This occurs because phenomena are explained using the mathematically based methodologies of mainly statistics. In this research the SPSS software package was utilised to provide a view of the reality of this research, in an objective manner. In earlier Chapters (1 and 3) the process for obtaining the data for this study was explained and involved, in the first instance, the introduction of the questionnaire responses into the NVivo Software Programme and later, with numerical coding, into the SPSS Software Programme. Several groupings of the data were utilised to investigate the statistical relationships or connections between the categories of information and the frequency of risk taking by the female participants. This study will provide a guide for other researchers to repeat the processes to determine whether the relationships and connections are valid in further studies.

5.1 Quantitative Research Objectives

The first of the Five Objectives, from the seven outlined in Chapters I and 3, was concerned with the females’ sense of self and their aspirations and their risk taking attitudes. The second Research Objective investigated the controls on them, when young, and their attitudes to law and authority. With the Third Objective the researcher’s interest was about the amount of expectations placed upon the females, with the Fourth Objective being concerned with the participants’ resilience to trauma. The fifth Research Objective investigated their need for “sensation seeking” and perception of and participation in negative risk taking activities. These objectives were also used for the data

collection in the quantitative and qualitative research in the previous Chapter 4, the current Chapter 5 and will be used again in Chapter 7 with an additional Research Objective 7.

5.2 Procedures for Data Collection

5.2.1 SPSS Coding

The initial categorization of the NVivo data from the questionnaire survey into numerical form for the SPSS Programme proved to be too extensive and was reduced in the second coding to provide categories with more statistically viable numbers e.g. Mothers' and Fathers' Educational attainments were reduced from the eight levels of University, Technical College, Senior Secondary, Grade 10, Grade 9, Grade 8, Grade 7, Primary School to just four, University/Trained, Senior Secondary, To Year 10, Below Yr 10. Similarly the participants' interests, identified with Present and Past categories in Sports, Music, Dancing, Band and Hobbies were divided into two groups-Present and Past, but just with three categories of Sport/Music, Others/Combinations, None. Future Goals Personal was slashed from seventeen categories ranging from Training to Travel to Relocation to two categories, Personal Aspirations and Travel /Relocation /Sport.

The SPSS Software Programme is among the most widely used statistical programme to be used for analysing Social Science type studies. SPSS functions with independent variables (IVs) (Independent Variables or facts, controlled and manipulated by the researcher) and dependent variables (DVs) (Dependent Variables relating to what is being measured, such as t values and degrees of freedom, recognising relationships between them). Definitions of terminology involved with statistics assisted the associated analysis of the findings and their meanings. The SPSS Programme also offers the ability to obtain both descriptive and inferential statistics, the two types of statistics which were the focus in this study. Descriptives calculate the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum and allow exposure for inferences to be made. It is only possible to prescribe one variable list with descriptives, but there is no limit to the number of variables named or implied on one command.

The Mean, as a descriptive option, utilises the sum of a series of respondent replies divided by the number of replies in the series. It is commonly used to test the central tendency of variables. The use of significance, an inferential option, expresses the relationships between variables and is noted with a .05 or less result. This significance provides a degree of certainty that the results from the sample of participants in this study can be generalised to other female populations of adolescent females in the age range of sixteen to nineteen.

The Crosstabulations' procedures obtain descriptives and produce two-way to n-way crosstabulations and related statistical measures for variables with numerical or string values. Additional to cell counts, you can obtain cell percentages and expected values (Norusis, 1990, p. 141). They express a descriptive explanation of independent variables crosstabulated with selected dependent variables and often refer to attitude and behaviour. Crosstabulations is a command which allows researchers to cross-classify people in terms of their answers to one or more questions. This system illustrates the logic that operates within a system of attitudes people hold about a specific topic, in this case the negative risk taking of adolescent female students, aged sixteen to nineteen. The total number of participants which agree, together with the percentage of those with an opinion on the subject being cross-checked, are shown and also that number and percentage of participants who opposed the subject (Babbie & Halley, 1995, p. 72). Levene's tests also demonstrate relationships between categories "with descriptive statistics for variables labelled attitudes" (Corston & Coleman, 2000, p. 57). Levene's tests compare an attitude and a dependent variable to provide results "to help you decide whether the assumption of equal variances holds" and is significant (Corston & Colman, 2000, p. 57).

T-TESTS compute the respondents' *t* statistic for testing the significance of a difference in means for independent or paired samples (Norusis, 1990, p. 166). ANOVA (the Analysis of Variance) is an analytical technique aimed at determining whether variables are related to one another. Once differences are found, Post Hoc Tests determine which Means differ. This is based on a comparison of differences among three or more groups and the variance on the

same variable within each of the subgroups in the study under investigation (Babbie & Halley, 1995, p. 340).

The functions of the SPSS Programme look at the relationships between independent variables (IVs), which often refer to facts manipulated by the researcher, and dependent variables (DVs), which often refer to measurements, degrees of freedom and relationships between attitudes and behaviour. The independent variables (IVs) were composed from the questionnaire survey and concentrated on age, location, numbers of family members, parental educational levels, interests and religion. They also included childhood enjoyment, parental relationships, authority, expectations and reactions, school experiences, significant others, personal expectations for the future, self-concept components, trauma, responsibility and risk perception and participation.

The data analysis in this Chapter utilised, in the first instance, the Crosstabulations calculations. Each of the independent variable (IV) factors such as age, location, birth order, parental authority, religious involvement and enjoyment of schools were measured for association with the dependent variable (DV) factors concerning the frequencies of the risky activities being researched (See Table 3). Then T-Tests were conducted with the independent variables corresponding to the first five Objectives, associated again with the dependent frequencies of the risky activities e.g. personal description favourable associated with binge drinking. ANOVA tests were conducted in a different manner, this time with groups with at least four variables from each of the independent and dependent categories e.g. type of siblings, parent educational levels, peer influence, present interests, associated with alcohol use, drink driving, speeding in cars and binge drinking.

5.3 Data Analysis

5.3.1 The Background of the Participants

There were ninety-one participants in this questionnaire survey part of the whole study. They were all female and came from an extensive area of Tasmania, where there was a mixture of small towns and isolated country areas (See Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: *Location of Participants*

Location	Frequency	Percent
Town	57	62.6
Country	34	37.4
Total	91	100.0

This table indicates that the dominant group of participants came from the town areas. Many of these would have travelled by bus or private car to the Senior Secondary College. Others would have had boarding places in Student Accommodation or in private homes.

Table 5.2: *Age of Participants*

Age	Frequency	Percent
16	55	60.4
17	33	36.2
18	2	2.2
19	1	1.0
Total	91	100.0

This table indicates that the prominent group was aged sixteen which is evidence that that they had just completed four years of High School education. The participants in the seventeen, eighteen and nineteen year old groups had begun their Senior Secondary education later than the norm and had taken “gap” time from their compulsory education and may have spent this in alternative education pursuits, locally, nationally or internationally (e.g. Overseas Exchange Programmes) or in employment (See Table 5.2)

5.3.2 Independent and Dependent Variables

This statistical analysis used two categories of variables-the independent variables and the dependent variables mentioned arising from the questionnaire. These are listed in the table below (See Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: *Independent and Dependent Variables.*

Independent Variables (IVs)	Independent Variables (IVs)	Dependent Variables (DVs)
Age	Future Goals	Binge
Location	Goal	Drinking/
Family	Achievement	Getting
Mothers' / Fathers'	Parental	Drunk
Education Levels	Relationships	Drinking
Aspirations	Childhood	Alcohol
Sport/Clubs/	Changes	Drink
Religion/Church	Parental	Driving
Attendance	Authority	Injecting
Early Childhood	Reaction	Heroin
Parental Influence	Authority	Sex
Childhood	Other Controls	without a
Expectations	Trauma	Condom
School Enjoyment	Coping	Sex no Pill
Peer Group	Risk Choice	Sex with -
Influence Significant	Treatment	Strangers
Others	Teenagers	Sharing
Future Expectation	Risk Ratings	needles
Personal		Smoking
Descriptions		Marijuana/
Traumas		Hash
Responsibility		Sniffing
		glue or
		Solvents
		Snorting
		Cocaine
		Speeding
		in a car
		Taking
		Speed/
		Cocaine
		X-Rated
		Videos

5.3.3 Dependent Variables and the Likert Scale

For the categories of Risk Ratings, the Likert Scale gave the participants a range of 1 to 8 where 1 (One) represented Not Risky and 7 (Seven) represented Very Risky and 8 (Eight) permitted a Don't Know response. With the Dependent Variables in Risk Participation, the Likert Scale gave a range of 1-4

where 1 was No/Never, 2 Yes/Once, 3 Yes/Occasionally, and 4 Yes/Regularly (See Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: *Dependent Variables/Risk Types*

Risk Types
Binge Drinking /Getting Drunk
Drinking Alcohol
Drink Driving
Injecting Heroin
Sex without a Condom
Sex with self not being on the Pill
Sex with someone not known well
Sharing needles
Smoking marijuana/hash
Sniffing glue or solvents
Snorting cocaine
Speeding in a car
Taking speed and cocaine
Watching X or R rated videos

5.4 Analysis with Crosstabulations

5.4.1 Research Objective 1: To ascertain the concept of “self” in adolescent females, the adolescent females’ aspirations for the future and their risk taking attitudes.

In the table below the independent variables, which were significant in Crosstabulations with key dependent variables, indicate that from the perspective of a sense of identity, the participants had several factors, which indicated a relationship, with their risk taking activities. It was interesting to note that the religious and church affiliations had strong relationships with non-alcohol use and abuse and contraception with sexual activity (See Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: *Sense of Identity Crosstabulations*

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Significance
Personal Description Favourable	Frequency of Sex with Strangers	.039
Sense of Responsibility	Frequency Viewing X-Rated Videos	.020
Aspirations	Frequency of No Condom Use	.015
Religion Current	Frequency of Binge Drinking	.001
Church Attendance	Frequency of Drinking Alcohol	.002
Church Attendance	Frequency of No Contraceptive Pill Use	.041
Church Attendance	Frequency of No Condom Use	.041

5.4.1.1 Personal Description Favourable and Frequency of Sex with Strangers Crosstabulation

Table 5.6: *Personal Description Favourable and Frequency of Sex with Strangers Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 8.453, df = 1, p\text{-value} = .004 < 0.05$$

			frequency of sex with strangers		Total
			No Partic	Once/Occas/Reg	
personal description favourable	Favourable	Count	77	9	86
		% within personal description favourable	89.5%	10.5%	100.0%
		% within frequency of sex with strangers	98.7%	81.8%	96.6%
		% of Total	86.5%	10.1%	96.6%
	Negative	Count	1	2	3
		% within personal description favourable	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within frequency of sex with strangers	1.3%	18.2%	3.4%
		% of Total	1.1%	2.2%	3.4%
Total	Count	78	11	89	
	% within personal description favourable	87.6%	12.4%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of sex with strangers	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	87.6%	12.4%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.453 ^b	1	.004		
Continuity Correction ^a	4.061	1	.044		
Likelihood Ratio	5.106	1	.024		
Fisher's Exact Test				.039	.039
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.358	1	.004		
N of Valid Cases	89				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .37.

There was a close relationship between a personal description favourable (a sense of self) crosstabulated with the frequency of sex with strangers at a result of .004. This cross-tabulation indicated that 87.6 percent had no participation in this activity, including both those with positive and negative descriptions of themselves, but with the much larger majority of 86.5 percent being those with favourable opinions. However, it should be noted that there were more participants with a favourable self description who had had sex with strangers, than those with negative opinions, but the numbers were low, 9 and 2

respectively. It is not surprising to note that attitudes from a positive sense of self would inhibit this risky behaviour (See Table 5.6).

5.4.1.2. Sense of Responsibility and Frequency of Viewing X-Rated Videos

Crosstabulation

There was a close relationship at .020 between the participants' sense of responsibility and their frequency of viewing X-Rated videos. However, it can be noted, that the percentage for those who did have a Full or Part sense of responsibility for their lives and had not participated in this behaviour was in total 40.9 percent, only somewhat lower than those who had participated Once/Regularly which had a total result of 55.7 percent. There were only three or 3.3 percent of participants, who had no sense of responsibility or other considerations, who had participated in viewing X-Rated videos, much lower than what could be expected (See Table 5.7).

Table 5.7: *Sense of Responsibility and Frequency of Viewing X Rated Videos Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 15.076, df=6, p\text{-value} = .020 < 0.05$$

			frequency of viewing X rated videos			Total
			No Participation	Once	Occas/ Reg	
sense of responsibility	Yes	Count	35	25	14	74
		% within sense of responsibility	47.3%	33.8%	18.9%	100.0%
		% within frequency of viewing X rated videos	97.2%	75.8%	73.7%	84.1%
		% of Total	39.8%	28.4%	15.9%	84.1%
	Partly	Count	1	7	3	11
		% within sense of responsibility	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%	100.0%
		% within frequency of viewing X rated videos	2.8%	21.2%	15.8%	12.5%
		% of Total	1.1%	8.0%	3.4%	12.5%
	No	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within sense of responsibility	.0%	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of viewing X rated videos	.0%	.0%	10.5%	2.3%
		% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.3%	2.3%
	Other	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within sense of responsibility	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of viewing X rated videos	.0%	3.0%	.0%	1.1%
		% of Total	.0%	1.1%	.0%	1.1%
Total	Count	36	33	19	88	
	% within sense of responsibility	40.9%	37.5%	21.6%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of viewing X rated videos	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	40.9%	37.5%	21.6%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.076 ^a	6	.020
Likelihood Ratio	15.131	6	.019
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.213	1	.013
N of Valid Cases	88		

a. 9 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

5.4.1.3 Aspirations and Frequency of No Condom Use Crosstabulation

There was a strong relationship indicated at .012 between the Aspirations of the participants and the non-use of condoms with sexual activity. University/Training aspirations were key factors in determining their non-participation in this behaviour at 59.3 percent compared to a much lower 22 percent who had entered into sexual activity without the use of condoms. The situation was reversed for those who just wanted to finish their school experience, in this case at Year 12 and who did not want to continue onto further education. There were slightly more of these participants, at 11 percent, who had recorded this non-use of condoms' behaviour compared to 7.7 percent who had not participated in this activity. It appears that having worthwhile aspirations and longer-term education goals could be factors in curbing risk-taking activities. With all the health risks in society today, it would be desirable for all participants to consider their exposure to sexually transmitted diseases with the use of contraceptive products (See Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: *Aspirations and Frequency of No Condom Use Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 6.325, df = 1, p\text{-value} = .012 < 0.05$$

			frequency of no condom use		Total
			No Participation	Once/Occ/ Reg	
aspirations	University/Trained	Count	54	20	74
		% within aspirations	73.0%	27.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	88.5%	66.7%	81.3%
		% of Total	59.3%	22.0%	81.3%
	Finish School/ Other	Count	7	10	17
		% within aspirations	41.2%	58.8%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	11.5%	33.3%	18.7%
		% of Total	7.7%	11.0%	18.7%
	Total	Count	61	30	91
		% within aspirations	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.325 ^b	1	.012		
Continuity Correction ^a	4.968	1	.026		
Likelihood Ratio	5.981	1	.014		
Fisher's Exact Test				.020	.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.255	1	.012		
N of Valid Cases	91				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.60.

5.4.1.4 Religion Current and Frequency of Binge Drinking Crosstabulation

The effect of Religion in reducing risky taking behaviour was noted in the literature research and gains much credibility regarding relationships from this crosstabulation at .001. Those with religious affiliations and those still uncertain about this aspect of their lives had no or little participation in Binge Drinking at 33 percent, and had nearly doubled the result for those who had no religion at 18.7 percent. Another contrast occurred with those in the religious group who had Occasional/Regular Binge Drinking activity being less than half, at 14.3 percent compared to the non- religious group at 34.1 percent for the same category. The total participation rate for the Religious/Non Binge Drinking group was slightly higher at 51.6 percent compared to the Religious/Binge Drinking group at 48.4 percent indicating an attitude which prevents this risky behaviour (See Table 5.9).

Table 5.9: *Religion Current and Frequency of Binge Drinking Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 10.717, df=1, p\text{-value} = .001 < 0.05$$

			frequency of binge drinking		Total
			No Part/Once	Occas/Reg	
religioncurrent	Yes / Uncertain	Count	30	13	43
		% within religioncurrent	69.8%	30.2%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	63.8%	29.5%	47.3%
		% of Total	33.0%	14.3%	47.3%
	No	Count	17	31	48
		% within religioncurrent	35.4%	64.6%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	36.2%	70.5%	52.7%
		% of Total	18.7%	34.1%	52.7%
Total	Count	47	44	91	
	% within religioncurrent	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of binge drinking	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.717 ^b	1	.001		
Continuity Correction ^a	9.386	1	.002		
Likelihood Ratio	10.952	1	.001		
Fisher's Exact Test				.002	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.599	1	.001		
N of Valid Cases	91				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 20.79.

5.4.1.5 Church Attendance and the Frequency of Drinking Alcohol, No Contraceptive Pill Use and No Condom Use Crosstabulations

The independent variable of Church Attendance produced very close relationships regarding Frequency of Drinking Alcohol, No Contraceptive Pill Use and No Condom Use when crosstabulated against a variety of dependent variables. The first of these variables crosstabulated Church Attendance with the frequency of drinking alcohol, demonstrated a relationship at .002. Table 10 below demonstrates that as the church attendance diminishes from often to infrequent and never, the frequency of drinking alcohol increases at a noticeable rate from 0 percent for regularly and 5.6 percent for occasionally when crosstabulated with church attendance to 17.8 percent for regularly and 25.6 percent for occasionally, with never as a frequency for church attendance (See Table 5.10).

Table 5.10: *Church Attendance and Frequency of Drinking Alcohol Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 16.443, df = 4, p\text{-value} = .002 < 0.05$$

			frequency of drinking alcohol			Total
			No Part/Once	Occasionally	Regularly	
church attendance	Often	Count	6	5	0	11
		% within church attendance	54.5%	45.5%	.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of drinking alcohol	42.9%	10.4%	.0%	12.2%
		% of Total	6.7%	5.6%	.0%	12.2%
	Infrequent	Count	4	20	12	36
		% within church attendance	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within frequency of drinking alcohol	28.6%	41.7%	42.9%	40.0%
		% of Total	4.4%	22.2%	13.3%	40.0%
	Never	Count	4	23	16	43
		% within church attendance	9.3%	53.5%	37.2%	100.0%
		% within frequency of drinking alcohol	28.6%	47.9%	57.1%	47.8%
		% of Total	4.4%	25.6%	17.8%	47.8%
Total	Count	14	48	28	90	
	% within church attendance	15.6%	53.3%	31.1%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of drinking alcohol	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	15.6%	53.3%	31.1%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.443 ^a	4	.002
Likelihood Ratio	15.802	4	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.892	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	90		

a. 2 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.71.

The second of these crosstabulations with Church Attendance and the Frequency of No Contraceptive Pill use showed a relationship at .041. Again there was a marked progression in the non-use of the contraceptive pill, from those who attended church often at 0 percent to 39.3 percent for infrequent attendees and 60.7 percent for those who were non-attendees at a church (See Table 5.11).

Table 5.11 *Church Attendance and Frequency No Contraceptive Pill Use Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 6.397, df = 3, p\text{-value} = .041 < 0.05$$

			frequency of no contraceptive pill use		Total
			No Participation	Once/Occ/Reg	
church attendance	Often	Count	11	0	11
		% within church attendance	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no contraceptive pill use	17.7%	.0%	12.2%
	Infrequent	Count	25	11	36
		% within church attendance	69.4%	30.6%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no contraceptive pill use	40.3%	39.3%	40.0%
	Never	Count	26	17	43
		% within church attendance	60.5%	39.5%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no contraceptive pill use	41.9%	60.7%	47.8%
Total	Count	62	28	90	
	% within church attendance	68.9%	31.1%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of no contraceptive pill use	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.397 ^a	2	.041
Likelihood Ratio	9.569	2	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.372	1	.020
N of Valid Cases	90		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.42.

The third crosstabulation was with Church Attendance and the Frequency of No Condom Use, which also indicated a relationship at .041. Again there was a marked progression from not participating in this activity at 0 percent for those

who attended church often to 56.7 percent for those who never attended church. All these sharp contrasts emphasise the importance of the attitudes of those with church attendance and the behaviour of the participants with selected risky activities (See Table 5.12).

Table 5. 12: *Church Attendance and No Condom Use Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 6.639, df = 2, p\text{-value} = .041 < 0.05$$

			frequency of no condom use		Total
			No Participation	Once/Occ/Reg	
church attendance	Often	Count	11	0	11
		% within church attendance	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	18.3%	.0%	12.2%
	Infrequent	Count	23	13	36
		% within church attendance	63.9%	36.1%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	38.3%	43.3%	40.0%
	Never	Count	26	17	43
		% within church attendance	60.5%	39.5%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	43.3%	56.7%	47.8%
Total	Count	60	30	90	
	% within church attendance	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of no condom use	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.369 ^a	2	.041
Likelihood Ratio	9.768	2	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.188	1	.041
N of Valid Cases	90		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.67.

5.4.2 Research Objective 2: To ascertain the amount of personal control evident in the adolescent girls' lives in their younger years and their attitudes regarding the law, legal restrictions and adult authority.

In this section the crosstabulations will consider the categories in Research Objective 2, determining the participants' reaction to controls in their lives. (See Table 5.13) All aspects of Parental contact with the participants

demonstrated relationships with their participation in Binge Drinking and Sexual Activity with Strangers and with the Smoking of Hash (See Table 5.14).

Table 5.13: *Parental Control and Influence Crosstabulations*

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Significance
Parental Control	Frequency of Binge Drinking	.037
Parental Control	Frequency of Sex with Strangers	.027
Parental Control	Frequency of Smoking Hash	.012
Parental Influence / Authority	Frequency of Binge Drinking	.040
Parental Influence	Frequency of Sex with Strangers	.018
Parental Relationships	Frequency of Binge Drinking	.034

5.4.2.1 Parental Control and Frequency of Binge Drinking, Frequency of Sex with Strangers and Frequency of Smoking Hash Crosstabulations

Parental Control over the students' lives was significant with three of the risk taking activities. The first crosstabulation was with Parental Control and the Frequency of Binge Drinking, which indicated a relationship at .037. It was interesting to note that these results did not follow the levels of parental control. Those participants with Much control or None were lower in total results at 30.8 percent and 9.9 percent respectively compared to those with Some parental control at 59.3 percent. Within this Some Control category, a slightly larger group at 27.5 percent was influenced to be in the No participation/Once group compared to the Much Control group at 23.1 percent. However, by contrast, 31.9 percent in the Some Control group did participate

in the Occasionally/Regularly category for Binge Drinking, compared to 7.7 percent for Much control (See Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: *Parental Control and Frequency of Binge Drinking Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 6.582, df = 2, p\text{-value} = .037 < 0.05$$

			frequency of binge drinking		Total
			No Partic/Once	Occasional/Regular	
parental control	Much	Count	21	7	28
		% within parental control	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	42.0%	17.1%	30.8%
		% of Total	23.1%	7.7%	30.8%
	Some	Count	25	29	54
		% within parental control	46.3%	53.7%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	50.0%	70.7%	59.3%
		% of Total	27.5%	31.9%	59.3%
	None	Count	4	5	9
		% within parental control	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	8.0%	12.2%	9.9%
		% of Total	4.4%	5.5%	9.9%
Total	Count	50	41	91	
	% within parental control	54.9%	45.1%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of binge drinking	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	54.9%	45.1%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.582 ^a	2	.037
Likelihood Ratio	6.842	2	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.205	1	.023
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.05.

The second category with a close relationship with Parent Control was with the curbing of the Frequency of Sex with Strangers at .027. Again it was interesting that the participants, who only had Some parental control, were the biggest group with 59.3 percent, representing those participants with No Participation/Once with this activity and 0 percent for Occasionally/Regularly.

This, as with the binge drinking activity, could be accounted for by revelations in the literature review where it was stated that adolescents do have the capacity to moderate their own behaviour.

Table 5.15: *Parental Control Frequency of Sex with Strangers Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 7.224, df = 2, p\text{-value} = .027 < 0.05$$

			frequency of sex with strangers		Total
			No Part/Once	Occasionally /Regularly	
parental control	None	Count	12	2	14
		% within parental control	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within frequency of sex with strangers	13.6%	66.7%	15.4%
		% of Total	13.2%	2.2%	15.4%
	Some	Count	54	0	54
		% within parental control	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of sex with strangers	61.4%	.0%	59.3%
		% of Total	59.3%	.0%	59.3%
	Much	Count	22	1	23
		% within parental control	95.7%	4.3%	100.0%
		% within frequency of sex with strangers	25.0%	33.3%	25.3%
		% of Total	24.2%	1.1%	25.3%
Total	Count	88	3	91	
	% within parental control	96.7%	3.3%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of sex with strangers	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	96.7%	3.3%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.224 ^a	2	.027
Likelihood Ratio	6.663	2	.036
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.445	1	.229
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .46.

Those with Much parental control had the second highest result with 24.2 percent for No Participation/Once, surprisingly less than half the former result, and a positive 1.1 percent for Occasionally/Regularly. None had only 13.2 percent in the No Participation/Once category and 2.2 percent for Occasionally/Regularly, much lower than could be expected. It appears from these figures that a mixture of control approaches impinge on the students'

lives and their participation rates in some risky activities, but some parental control is still important (See Table 5.15).

Table 5.16: *Parental Control Frequency of Smoking Hash Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 12.893, df=4, p\text{-value} = .012 < 0.05$$

			frequency of smoking hash			Total
			No Participation	Once	Occasionally /Regularly	
parental control	None	Count	7	0	7	14
		% within parental control	50.0%	.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of smoking hash	18.9%	.0%	24.1%	15.4%
		% of Total	7.7%	.0%	7.7%	15.4%
	Some	Count	19	22	13	54
		% within parental control	35.2%	40.7%	24.1%	100.0%
		% within frequency of smoking hash	51.4%	88.0%	44.8%	59.3%
		% of Total	20.9%	24.2%	14.3%	59.3%
	Much	Count	11	3	9	23
		% within parental control	47.8%	13.0%	39.1%	100.0%
		% within frequency of smoking hash	29.7%	12.0%	31.0%	25.3%
		% of Total	12.1%	3.3%	9.9%	25.3%
Total	Count	37	25	29	91	
	% within parental control	40.7%	27.5%	31.9%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of smoking hash	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	40.7%	27.5%	31.9%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.893 ^a	4	.012
Likelihood Ratio	16.549	4	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	.056	1	.813
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 2 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.85.

The third in this group with a close relationship is about Parent Control when crosstabulated with Smoking Hash being significant at .012. Again, Some control proved to be the surprising variable with No Participation at 20.9 percent, as against only 12.1 percent for those with Much control and a lower 7.7 percent result for those with None as a control variable. Those with Some controls had other interesting results with a combined 38.5 percent for those who had participated Once or Occasionally/Regularly, this result representing more than a third of the participants. This compares dramatically with 13.2

percent for Much control and a low 7.7 percent for None for the same criteria (See Table 5.16).

5.4.2.2 Parental Influence/Authority and Frequency of Binge Drinking and Frequency of Sex with Strangers Crosstabulations

Table 5.17: *Parental Influence/Authority and Frequency of Binge Drinking Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 6.451, df = 2, p\text{-value} = .040 < 0.05$$

			frequency of binge drinking		Total
			No Partic/Once	Occasional/ Regular	
parental influence authority	Mother	Count	42	25	67
		% within parental influence authority	62.7%	37.3%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	84.0%	61.0%	73.6%
		% of Total	46.2%	27.5%	73.6%
	Father	Count	3	8	11
		% within parental influence authority	27.3%	72.7%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	6.0%	19.5%	12.1%
		% of Total	3.3%	8.8%	12.1%
	Both	Count	5	8	13
		% within parental influence authority	38.5%	61.5%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	10.0%	19.5%	14.3%
		% of Total	5.5%	8.8%	14.3%
Total	Count	50	41	91	
	% within parental influence authority	54.9%	45.1%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of binge drinking	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	54.9%	45.1%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.451 ^a	2	.040
Likelihood Ratio	6.526	2	.038
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.476	1	.034
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.96.

The crosstabulation between Parent Influence and the Frequency of Binge Drinking showed a relationship at .040. It was obvious from Table 5.17 above that the Mother was the most influential parent for No Participation/Once with 46.2 percent, contrasting noticeably with the influence from the Father at a minimal 3.3 percent and only marginally better than with the Father was the

influence of Both parents at 5.5 percent. However, the situation is reversed for Occasionally/Regularly with Father and Both, each achieving only 8 percent participation compared to the lack of influences of Mother where participation was at 27.5 percent. These contrasts could be explained by the increased freedom being given to adolescents at this time and their choices being tempered in part by the influence of parents, but more so with their need to seek fun and excitement through a range of risky behaviours such as Binge Drinking (See Table 5.17).

Table 5.18: *Parental Influence/Authority and Frequency of Sex With Strangers Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 8.057, df = 2, p\text{-value} = .018 < 0.05$$

			frequency of sex with strangers		Total
			No Partic	Once/Occ/Reg	
parental influence authority	Mother	Count	60	7	67
		% within parental influence authority	89.6%	10.4%	100.0%
		% within frequency of sex with strangers	75.0%	63.6%	73.6%
		% of Total	65.9%	7.7%	73.6%
	Father	Count	7	4	11
		% within parental influence authority	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%
		% within frequency of sex with strangers	8.8%	36.4%	12.1%
		% of Total	7.7%	4.4%	12.1%
	Both	Count	13	0	13
		% within parental influence authority	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of sex with strangers	16.3%	.0%	14.3%
		% of Total	14.3%	.0%	14.3%
Total	Count	80	11	91	
	% within parental influence authority	87.9%	12.1%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of sex with strangers	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	87.9%	12.1%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.057 ^a	2	.018
Likelihood Ratio	7.813	2	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	.043	1	.835
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.33.

The second Parent Influence crosstabulation showed a close relationship with the Frequency of Sex with Strangers with a result of .018. Again Mother had the most influence at 65.9 percent for No Participation compared to Father at only 7.7 percent and Both at only 14.5 percent. Both parents were more

influential for Once/Occasionally/Regularly at 0 percent participation, compared to participation for Mother at 7.7 percent and Father at 4 percent. The influence of the mother in the non-participation with this activity was not surprising given the accolades the participants had written about the contribution of the mothers to their lives (See Table 5.18).

5.4.2.3. Parental Relationships and Frequency of Binge Drinking Crosstabulation

Table 5. 19: *Parental Relationships and Frequency of Binge Drinking*

$$\chi^2 = 4.506, df=1, p\text{-value} = .034 < 0.05$$

			frequency of binge drinking		Total
			No Part/Once	Occas/Reg	
parental relationships	Positive/ Reasonable	Count	29	36	65
		% within parental relationships	44.6%	55.4%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	61.7%	81.8%	71.4%
		% of Total	31.9%	39.6%	71.4%
	Mixed	Count	18	8	26
		% within parental relationships	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%
		% within frequency of binge drinking	38.3%	18.2%	28.6%
		% of Total	19.8%	8.8%	28.6%
Total	Count	47	44	91	
	% within parental relationships	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of binge drinking	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.506 ^b	1	.034		
Continuity Correction ^a	3.574	1	.059		
Likelihood Ratio	4.603	1	.032		
Fisher's Exact Test				.039	.029
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.456	1	.035		
N of Valid Cases	91				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.57.

The crosstabulation between Parental Relationships and the Frequency of Binge Drinking showed relationships at .034. It was obvious from Table 5.19 above that having a Positive/Reasonable relationship with parents was

influential for some participants with Binge Drinking behaviour with Both and No Participation/Once achieving a result of 31.9 percent. However, there was an even higher result for Occasionally/Regularly with 39.6 percent, probably explained by the participants' need for "fun" and "excitement". Those with Mixed parental relationships were lesser in their participation with only 8.8 percent involved with this activity on an Occasional/Regular basis. A larger group of 19.8 percent was in the No Participation/Once category, making, in total, 51.7 percent involved at this lesser level with Binge Drinking. This indicated the need for parents to maintain an influence in the lives of their adolescent daughters (See Table 5.19).

5.4.4 Research Objective 4: To ascertain whether females are resilient to adversity in their lives.

The only Independent Variable in this category to influence sexual activity and contraception in Frequency of No Condom Use was the participants' Reaction to Trauma. Perhaps this trauma had built up resistance to danger and more caution in their lives.

Table 5.20: *Resilience and Trauma Crosstabulation*

Independent Variables and Significance	Dependent Variables	Significance
Trauma Reaction	Frequency of No Condom Use	.044

5.4.4.1 Trauma Reaction and Frequency of No Condom Use Crosstabulation

The crosstabulation of Trauma Reaction and No Condom Use showed a relationship at .044. A Positive Reaction to trauma provided the highest result for No Participation in No Condom use at 34.6 percent, but it achieved the lowest result for Once/Occasionally/Regularly with only 7.7 percent as opposed to the Supported Reaction with 15.4 percent and the Negative

Reaction with 10.3 percent for this category. A Negative Reaction to the category of Trauma/ No Participation at 16.7 percent was very similar to a Supported Reaction and No Participation at 15.4 percent, indicating that the Supported Reaction was in fact almost the same as a Negative reaction in that the participants needed help to adjust to the Trauma. It was only the Positive Reaction to Trauma, which influenced this behaviour, of No Condom use. The participants' resilience was most evident in the No Participation, whilst the Supported Reaction was not as influential in the Once/Occasionally/Regular aspect (See Table 5.21).

Table 5.21: *Trauma Reaction and Frequency of No Condom Use Crosstabulation*

$$\chi^2 = 6.229, df=2, p\text{-value} = .044 < 0.05$$

			frequency of no condom use		Total
			No Participation	Once/Occ/ Reg	
trauma reaction	Positive Reaction	Count	27	6	33
		% within trauma reaction	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	51.9%	23.1%	42.3%
		% of Total	34.6%	7.7%	42.3%
	Supported Reaction	Count	13	12	25
		% within trauma reaction	52.0%	48.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	25.0%	46.2%	32.1%
		% of Total	16.7%	15.4%	32.1%
	Negative Reaction	Count	12	8	20
		% within trauma reaction	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within frequency of no condom use	23.1%	30.8%	25.6%
		% of Total	15.4%	10.3%	25.6%
Total	Count	52	26	78	
	% within trauma reaction	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%	
	% within frequency of no condom use	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.229 ^a	2	.044
Likelihood Ratio	6.465	2	.039
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.505	1	.061
N of Valid Cases	78		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.67.

5.5 Results of Specific T Tests

Table 5.22: *Research Objectives' Results From Specific T Tests*

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Significance
Objective 1		
Enjoyment of College	Drinking Alcohol	TTest .05
Mother's Education	Smoking Hash	TTest .033
	Binge Drinking	Levenes .018
	Drinking Alcohol	Levenes .017
	Dangerous Driving	TTest .030
	Taking Drugs	Levenes .021
Objective 2		
Parental Influence/ Authority	Taking Drugs	Levenes .018
Parental Control	Binge Drinking	Levenes .017
		TTest .035
	Sex with Strangers	Levenes .018
Parental Control	Drinking Alcohol	Levenes .004
Parental Relationships	Sex With Strangers	Levenes .000
		T Test .034
	Binge Drinking	Levenes .000
		T Test .034
Control By Family	Binge Drinking	Levenes .002
	No Contraceptive Pill	T Test .030
	Drinking Alcohol	Levenes .001
		T Test .046
Objective 3		
Expectations Career	Sniffing Glue	T Test .030
Expectations Education	Dangerous Driving	T Test .038
	Taking Drugs	Levenes .027

Objective 3 (Cont'd) Expectations Education	Viewing X Rated Videos	Levenes .004
	Taking Drugs	T Test .030
	Dangerous Driving	Levenes .021
		Levenes .021
		T Test .030
<hr/>		
Objective 4		
Trauma Reaction	Binge Drinking	Levenes .017
		TTest .030
Trauma Reaction	Smoking Hash	Levenes .027
		T Test .033
	Viewing X Rated Videos	Levenes .004
Trauma Frequency	Sharing Needles	T Test .018
<hr/>		
Objective 5		
Risk Choice	No Contraceptive Pill	Levenes .045
		T Test .054
Risk Choice	Binge Drinking	Levenes .017
		T Test .030
<hr/>		
Risk Taking	No Contraceptive Pill	Levenes .045
		T Test .054

5.5.1 Analysis of Specific T Tests

It was interesting to note for Objective 1 (a sense of self) that the Mother's Education showed close relationships in a range of alcohol and drug risks. The participants' Enjoyment of College education was also interesting, being significant in their involvement with drinking alcohol. The enjoyment factor could have decreased the stress of their more challenging studies at the College. For Objective 2 (Controls) in their lives, the participants recorded many family variables as being related to decreasing their involvement in the risky activities relating to drug and alcohol use, drink driving and sexual activity including use of the contraceptive pill. Objective 3 (Expectations)

recorded strong relationships between Expectations for Education and careers and reducing drug use and dangerous driving.

For Objective 4 the participants' reaction to Trauma showed a relationship in regard to some extreme drinking activities, drug use and the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos. The participants' risk choices of risk taking for Objective 5 (Sensation Seeking) were also related with regard to the dangerous activities in the non-use of the contraceptive pill and binge drinking.

5.6 Results of Group T Tests

Table 5.23: *Results of Group T Tests*

Independent Variables	Group	Dependent Variables	Levene's Test	Significance (2Tailed)
Personal Description Favourable		Smoking Hash	.014	.154
		Dangerous Driving	.000	.000
Type of Siblings		No Contraceptive Pill	.030	.006
Aspirations		Binge Drinking	.000	.039
		Sniffing Glue	.029	.089
		No Condom Use	.000	.012
		No Contraceptive Pill	.000	.039
		Smoking Hash	.000	.039
Achievement		X Rated Videos	.021	.243
Religion		Sniffing Glue	.970	.003
Church Attendance		No Condom Use	.021	.040
Significant Family	Others	Sniffing Glue	.580	.051
Significant Others		Cocaine Use	.018	.083
Significant Community	Others	X Rated Videos	.079	.044
Significant School		Drinking Alcohol	.001	.042
		Cocaine Use	.000	.175

Parental	Drinking Alcohol	.018	.143
Influence/Authority	Dangerous Driving	.037	.175
Parents	Drink Driving		
Future Goals	Drinking Alcohol	.000	.119
Education	Drink Driving	.000	.007
	Taking Drugs	.000	.035
	Cocaine Use	.000	.035
Future Goals Career	Cocaine Use	.000	.193
		.003	.180
<hr/>			
Expectations	Drink Driving	.772	.038
Education	Dangerous Driving	.192	.005
Enjoyment of School	Heroin Use	.005	.281
	No Contraceptive Pill	.001	.074
<hr/>			
Enjoyment of College	Sex With Strangers	.821	.050
Enjoyment of College	Binge Drinking	.734	.005
	Heroin Use	.005	.609
<hr/>			
Peer Group Influence	Drink Driving	.021	.042
Presents Interests	Taking Drugs	.000	.134
<hr/>			
Mother's Education	Taking Drugs	.021	.087

5.6.1 Analysis of Group T Tests

All of these results can be arranged or categorised into four distinct groups of influences, namely Personal, Family, Religion and the School Community. The first group relates to the participants' personal qualities and aspirations being connected to preventing the smoking of hash, dangerous driving, binge drinking, viewing X-Rated videos, but favouring the use of the contraceptive pill. On the family level, the presence of siblings favoured the use of contraception and family diminished the use of the more dangerous drugs and the viewing of X-Rated videos. Religious affiliation related to only one drug use in sniffing glue, but assisted with sexuality issues and the use of condoms. There was a connection shown with School Influence preventing the use of cocaine in the Levene's result.

5.7 Results of ANOVA Tests

Table 5.24: *Significance of ANOVA Tests*

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Significance
Enjoyment of School	Dangerous Driving	.005
	Viewing X-Rated Videos	.027
Enjoyment of College	Binge Drinking	.005
Parental Control	X Rated Videos	.041
	Drinking Alcohol	.005
Trauma Reaction	X Rated Videos	.015
Club Importance	Drinking Alcohol	.036
Future Goals Education	Drinking Alcohol	.034
	Drink Driving	.035
	Drugs	.035
Parents	Binge Drinking /Most Risky/ Moderately Risky	.050
Parental Control	Binge Drinking	.035
Past Interests	Binge Drinking	.012
	No Contraceptive Pill	.058
	No Condom	.007
Expectations Education	Dangerous Driving	.038

5.7.1 Analysis of ANOVA Results

Again, with these results, definite categories of connections were noted. These included Personal Concerns, School Influences, Family Controls and Trauma Reaction. On the personal level Club Importance and Past Interests were connected to moderating alcohol use and the use of contraception methods. The participants' Goals and Educational Expectations were connected with dangerous driving and alcohol and drug intake. Their School and College interests were also connected with the viewing of X-Rated videos, alcohol and extreme Binge Drinking activities. Family Controls again showed relationships with alcohol and binge drinking, whilst Trauma reactions affected the use of X-Rated videos.

5.8 Conclusion

There are many instances in these statistical tables to indicate that a sense of personal identity, family control and community-based influences show close relationships or connections with negative risk-taking activities. It was pleasing to note that these personal characteristics, family and school influences could modify many of the extreme risky behaviours, such as binge drinking, dangerous driving and heavy drug use. The use of contraception was noted as being positively influenced by personal, religious and family influences. All of these findings indicate that young adolescent women are responding to many influences in their daily lives and are not engaging, without thought, into all risky activities.

Chapter 6 will analyse the responses to the Interview Survey using Research Objective 6 (RO6) and a set of Five Themes, while Chapter 7 will be dedicated to analysing the Policy Documents from the Australian and State perspectives using Research Objectives 1-5 and Research Objective 7 (RO7). Chapter 8 will summarise all the findings compared to the Literature Review, the qualitative and quantitative findings, the adolescent female and adult surveys and policy analyses.

CHAPTER SIX**INTERVIEW DATA ANALYSIS****6.0 Introduction**

This chapter concentrates on the analysis of the data received from the Interviews with School Administrators, Teachers and Parents who responded to the questions, as explained in Chapter 3, and repeated below. Five themes were identified from all the responses and coded using the procedures of the NVivo computer programme, as in Chapter 4. From the responses to the questions, key themes were identified, categorisation was completed and these categories were then regrouped to match the themes, these expressing further insight into the content of the replies to the questions.

6.1 Participants in the Interviews

The participants in the group for the Interviews were selected from those working in administration with adolescents, colleagues who were raising adolescent males or females and teachers who had had experience in varying sectors of the education system, including specialist areas. Verbal consent was first obtained from a wide variety of these professionals, before the interview questions were sent to them. The group deemed to be the most diverse consisted of a Principal of a Tasmanian Church founded Girls' College, a Vice-Principal of a Tasmanian Senior Secondary College, a Teacher in a Private Secondary School, a Teacher/Librarian in a State Primary School, a Parent/University Lecturer and a Parent/Mature-Aged Student/Researcher. This section was designed to highlight the views of those working and/or living with adolescents, so that "real life" views and opinions could come from the actual contexts in which the adolescents had lived or who were now living and studying to achieve their goals.

6.2 Interview Questions for Administrators, Teachers and Parents (IQs)

- IQ1.** What type of discussions should School Administrators/Teachers/Parents be having with students about their gender, attitudes, behaviours and life choices?
- IQ2.** Given that drugs are a part of life today, what strategies should School Administrators/Teachers/Parents use to inform their students?
- IQ3.** How can School Administrators/Teachers/Parents inform their students about risk taking, both positive and negative?
- IQ4.** What type of expectations can School Administrators/Teachers/Parents have about the female students' futures?
- IQ5.** What stereotypes and views exist for females in today's society?
- IQ6.** What type of educational programmes should School Administrators/Teachers/Parents undertake to inform their students about negative risk-taking? Consider that you have to counsel a sixteen-year old student. What advice, as a School Administrator/Teacher/Parent, would you give about the following risks?
- Alcohol Use
 - Drink Driving
 - Speeding
 - Drug Taking
 - Sexual Activity
 - Viewing Pornography

6.2.1 Interview Perspectives

In Chapter 3 the discussion of questionnaires provided valuable guidance for the writing and the distribution of sets of questions and analysing all the responses. It was noted in that analysis that questionnaires are popular research instruments as they are anonymous and confidential. Consent must be given before they are distributed, preventing any attempts for deception and the responses can be completed in private. Not only demographic information can be gained, but also rich data from open-ended questions. Contentious issues can be raised and the

respondents have a choice of answering them or not. The former research also indicated that single items in questions are better than several issues as responses are less confusing. Closed questions tend to demand answers more of a demographic nature or short one-word responses. Probing questions need to avoid the “Why” approach which can be confrontational. These are better approached with “In what way?” If using lists, in questions, these should be limited to five choices as long lists can create errors in judgement or confuse the respondent. However, in spite of some restrictions, questions are very valuable for generating new knowledge and opening up ideas for new research.

Further considerations by Bennekom (2005) discussed the need for researchers to understand their motivations when conducting a survey (p. 1). The Department of Administration, Minnesota (2008) also suggests that researchers focus definitely on the information they “need to know” rather than “nice to know” (p. 1). Researchers should also consider whether the questions cover the respondents’ lifestyle or any issues or habits they may have which impinge on the purpose of the survey (Survey Analysis, 1999, p. 4).

Bennekom (2005) also encourages the making of several drafts and using a pilot test to isolate any problem questions. There are also comments about the type of questions and discussion as to whether the researcher can multiply, divide or tally the results, or use scales, ranking, ordering or selecting options (pp. 1-2). “Keep things simple, concise and clear” is the advice from the Department of Administration, Minnesota (2008), (p. 2). Be cautious also about antagonising the respondents with controversial questions or using “ambiguous words” (DOA, 2008, p. 5). Researchers should also “think about the type of analysis” they want to conduct with their data (Bennekom, 2005, p. 4).

In Survey Analysis (1999) reasons are also provided as to why some questions are not answered. These include respondents with “a lack of knowledge” or those “not interested enough or too busy” to answer or the questions being “undesirable”

with suggestions earlier too, that wording can be “open to interpretation” (Survey Analysis, 1999, p. 1). The Department of Administration, Minnesota (2008), also urges researchers to consider all the ways “respondents will benefit from the survey” (p. 1). Whilst respondents will answer questions they, at times, “are not or are only slightly concerned” with the issue, so researchers should consider carefully, the correct group to use in any survey. Consideration should also be given as to whether these respondents have been questioned beforehand (Survey Analysis, 1999, p. 2).

For this research, the motivation in surveying the administrators, teachers and parents was to introduce opinions and ideas from the people who are dealing (or who have dealt) with adolescents in the “real” world of home or educational facilities. The administrators, teachers and parents would be concerned with the topics of negative risk taking in this study. There was no evidence that the respondents had been questioned before about these topics, as many discussions were held with them before the questions were sent by E-Mail, and they had given no indication that this was the situation. The questions would impinge on the students’ and parents’ lifestyle and habits and to a lesser extent on the administrators and teachers, in that they would be both proactive and reactive in providing support and curricula content to alleviate negative risk taking in their educational settings.

There were no pilot trials with the questions, but the research supervisor and the researcher reviewed several drafts before they were distributed to the survey group. The questions only focused on what was necessary to know and did not delve into the lives or individual case histories of adolescents. In this way any antagonism was avoided. There was a breadth of knowledge with all the respondents, as they were all participants in female lives and were all parents of children at various stages of maturity from adolescence to young adulthood. The vocabulary within the survey was not intended to confuse the respondents with the

interview benefits being very useful for both educators and parents and also for the general public.

6.2.2 Analysis of Interview Questions (IQs)

IQ1. *What type of discussions should school administrators/ teachers/parents be having with students about their gender, attitudes, behaviours and life choices?*

This question begins the survey and with reference to the theory just outlined, this open-ended question should produce very rich data on key elements of this study. It could be seen to be faulty on the basis of having four items in the list of topics under discussion. Only one parent mentioned that “gender” was not a common topic in her household, but examples of when the term was, or could be used, revealed that it was not an ambiguous concept. The question was also written in the conditional tense and therefore did not imply that the respondents were at fault, if they had not discussed these issues.

IQ2. *Given that drugs are a part of life today, what strategies should school Administrators/Teachers/Parents use to inform their students?*

This question, for the parents, could have been seen as antagonizing or confrontational, because of its inference that their daughters (or sons) could be involved with drug use and/or abuse. It was again open-ended and if taken in the correct vein, would yield many valuable strategies.

IQ3. *How can school Administrators/Teachers/Parents inform their students/children about risk taking, both positive and negative?*

There appears to be no problems with this question as it is clear and concise and simply requests advice and strategies to prevent the harmful affects of risk taking.

IQ4. *What type of expectations can school Administrators/Teachers/Parents have about the female students' futures?*

This question again, is an open-ended question and requests the respondents to foresee the future outcomes for the female adolescent in their lives. This would not be seen as antagonising and would instead utilise the knowledge the respondents would have on the females in their families to predict the future.

IQ5. *What stereotypes and views exist for females in today's society?*

This question attempts to revise the respondents' knowledge about male and female stereotypes and the chances open to the females and their aspirations today and should not affect the respondents in any way.

IQ6. *What type of educational programmes should School Administrators/Teachers/Parents undertake to inform their students about negative Risk-taking activities?*

The motive with this question is to ascertain the methods, which will produce resilience in adolescents and further strategies to prevent negative risk taking. Because this topic relies on the respondents' knowledge, already gained from their participation in the lives of females, there should not be any error in the asking of this question.

IQ7. *Consider that you have to counsel a sixteen-year old student. What advice, as a School Administrator/Teacher/Parent, would you give about the following risks?*

Alcohol Use

Drink Driving

Speeding

Drug Taking

Sexual Activity

Viewing Pornography

Again, this question could be seen as faulty because of the use of a long list of six risk taking activities. However, because these activities are at the core of this research, they were considered essential to the findings and were kept in this section. Information in the form of a context or societal position (IQ2 and IQ7) provided the background for the respondents in those sections of the interview questions.

6.2.3 Interview Question Summary

The questions appeared to have escaped from too many formal criticisms and have demonstrated the need for knowledge from a group of adults who are close to the lives of adolescents. There were no questions in the “Why?” form and only one impinging on lifestyles and habits (IQ2), with an additional one with an ambiguous word (IQ1) and one with antagonising qualities (IQ2). Lists in two of them (IQ1 and IQ7) were necessary to obtain the necessary information.

6.3 The Five Themes for Research Objective 6 (RO6)

From the responses to the questions sent to the Administrators, Teachers and Parents, the following themes were identified. These themes included general advice and, expectations for students, cautionary warnings regarding health repercussions from risk taking, strategies for preventing risk taking and measures to create resilience among young people.

6.4 Analysis of Themes

6.4.1 Advice to Students

In this section the emphasis is on the sense of “self” as noted in the responses from the administrators/teachers and parents in relation to what constitutes identity and the realization of “self”, for the females in the care of a school or a family. These attitudes will appear in the values they pass onto the adolescent

females. Of particular interest will be the language used to express these values and its appropriateness to the level of understanding of female adolescents.

Two of the parent respondents were mothers of teenage daughters. For the first parent, the three main areas for discussion were alcohol use, drug use and sex, because she wanted her daughters “to have control” over whatever activities they may encounter and engage in them. There would (for her) be an emphasis on the propensity of alcohol and drugs “to affect judgement”. The first parent had had exposure to “statistics about alcoholism” being linked to the age when children and teenagers have their first drink. Concerning drugs, the first parent would discuss how the psychological affect is unknown for each individual and how the quality of and content of drugs is often unknown. The mental state of users is also a deterrent. The second parent (with her partner) tended

*To focus on critical thinking around attitudes, beliefs and values
...[ensuring] that our daughter is responsible. [Adolescence is] a
critical time in forming most of those elements of her as a person.*

(Parent 2, Interview).

One administrator, the Principal of the Church founded Girls’ College, indicated that her emphasis with adolescent girls is to urge them to consider their “life choices” and the values that they will have throughout their lives. This language is quite generalized, and could confuse those without any definite plans, perturbed by the amount of choices there could be at this stage of their lives. Additionally, one parent suggested that she could provide information on the outcomes of relevant choices by asking key questions such as “What sort of life do you want for yourself?” There are mixed approaches here, philosophical overall and yet very practical, both suitable for adolescent reflection.

The second parent was confident that her daughter would be able to achieve “whatever she intended to do”. This parent felt that young people should be encouraged to think about the choices they have in particular situations and that additionally, they should remember that the peer group influence, although intense

at this stage of their lives, is only fleeting and that it will not “rule your life”. This parent also indicated that there were only references about the topic of “gender”, for them when a film or novel was being discussed. However, the Principal of the Girls’ College added more on gender with her thoughts on women and leadership.

There is still the issue of leadership for women-the statistics on women in leadership position indicate a bias towards men. I think that many of the stereotypes are being challenged through better provision of childcare, equal pay [but not always] and changing role models for men. [Men do take on more domestic roles].

(Administrator 1, Interview).

The second parent continued the general advice for adolescents by suggesting that need for the development in children of certain characteristics.

Encourage the children to develop their futural thinking skills-to be able to predict an expected outcome from an event or situation. If, for example, the child would like to have a certain job/career [a goal]...[give] them a sense of proportion, to think of risk taking as a calculation that might or might not turn out how you would like it to.

(Parent 2, Interview).

This type of language could alienate the students with its abstractions, but if accompanied with discussion, the messages would be clearer. The two parents, together, felt that adolescents must have an understanding about their own needs, the reasons behind their actions or, in other words, “a cause and effect” calculation.

Advice about sexual activity, from both the administrators, emphasised that the participants should understand the risks involved, whilst one parent added that to say “No” was acceptable. The teachers felt that the participants should have safe sex discussions and think clearly about contraception. They should also have safe

sex discussions including the cost of contraception as an issue. Stress would be the result if the wrong choices were made. One parent was more liberal regarding sexual activity, suggesting that her daughters had some choice with this risk.

I've always been of the opinion that my girls' bodies are their own. It comes down to respecting themselves and having the respect of the other person. Trust is also an issue...I would suggest that if they want to have sex, that they should use protection.

(Parent 1, Interview).

Three pieces of advice were given about the topic of pornography, one type from the first administrator and others from the second teacher and second parent. The administrator urged the participants “to follow their conscience”, with the second teacher suggesting students should have a “have a sense of worth” and the second parent suggesting that “there are limits”. Teacher one was very concerned about the pornography question.

Do young girls REALLY WANT to look at pornography??? Or is this something done to be part of the “IN” crowd?...Viewing pornography is a male thing in my opinion. Anyway, what is pornography to one person may be Arthouse to someone else. I think a parent needs to be aware of what sites a dependent child is accessing.

(Teacher 1, Interview).

6.4.2 Expectations for Students

In this section all the expectations of the Administrators, Teachers and Parents have been compared to ascertain the amount of pressure the adolescent is under in today's society. One parent focussed on sexual activity, advocating that her

daughter be aware of engaging in “respectful relationships”. With the second parent there was an emphasis, on the daughter being “responsible for herself and towards other people”, both pieces of advice being useful for the daughter as it gave a clear direction. One administrator commented that she advises adolescent girls “how their behaviour affects others”. The first teacher’s family did discuss the difficulties faced by males, as they have had many expectations placed upon them in today’s society, whereas girls can show their emotional side and do not have to appear to be “tough”. The second parent also felt that adolescence was a critical time for her daughter with the expectation “to form the person she would become”, because this would be “a product of her attitudes, behaviour and life choices”.

The main expectation for one administrator was that they would be responsible citizens; concerned about others and the world they lived in. The Church founded school administrator would also expect them to be able to find “a career pathway” from the guidance and support given to them by the school and its mission. Additionally, the school hoped that this guidance and support would enable them to take on challenges and to make a contribution to the world. Forming “relationships” was also important, as was “welcoming diversity”, being “creative thinkers and becoming problem solvers”. The second administrator wrote about her school providing all the services to allow “positive outcomes for all students” and that the “expectations for females were no different to those for males”. The females should aim to go “as high as they could” with their learning, career expectations and future pathways. A wide range of positive demands on the students was evident.

As administrators/leaders, we have always worked and continue to work very actively on building, maintaining and moving forward a culture in the college that is supportive, [and] allows positive outcomes for young people.

(Administrator 2, Interview).

The Teacher/Librarian felt the females should be given “the highest level of expectations” and that role models should be made available or, alternatively, “programmes about self-development”, available in Libraries, could be a part of the process. The second teacher felt the same as one administrator, in that they should have the same expectations as males, to be “productive members” of society” and to be happy with their “life choices”.

Both parents surveyed felt that their daughters should have “their own choices” as to what they would want for their lives. The first parent, only ever wanted her children “to be happy with the choices they made and to be healthy”. Whilst other expectations would have been desirable, this parent thought that “their lives belonged to them” and it would be the daughters who would have to satisfy themselves about what they were doing. The second parent, together with the father, had negotiated a set of expectations based on their daughter’s sense of success and achievement in life. Personally, the mother had wanted “to encourage high levels of self-efficacy”, through taking managed risks and developing a “robust self esteem based on an appreciation of others”. These expectations would be much wider than had been set for this parent, by her own mother.

6.4.3 Health Concerns for Students

The concerns here were focused mainly on contraception and AIDS related problems with input also on alcohol and drug use. The first parent advocated the “use of protection”, for not only contraception, but also “to avoid the risks of Hepatitis and AIDS” which result in very serious consequences coming from the first aspect concerning a lack of “self respect”. Again the language is generalized, but a clear message has been given. The second parent suggested that there should also be a candid attitude about all the attractions and enjoyable effects of drug use, at the same time as emphasising the “social, emotional and health consequences”.

The teachers emphasised the effect of peer pressure and the differences in suitable female and male alcohol consumption levels. The parents advocated monitoring the number of drinks being consumed and the need to eat while drinking alcohol. The first teacher emphasised that drug and alcohol abuse was “a large aspect of society today” and that students should also be made aware of the dangers of prescription drugs and medications bought over the counter. Another teacher, who is also “the mother of four sons”, emphasised the need for drink-driving education, as this is the “main worry for both teachers and parents”, because students think that they are “invincible”. This teacher also advocated the need for instruction about “safe sex” as “no one wants to lose students from AIDS and STDs or providing early grandchildren for their parents”.

Health Education in most schools also provided much information for students with the Senior Secondary College providing a “full service” approach with many professional services available on-site and also available off-site.

6.4.4 Strategies to Assist Students

All the methods outlined in this section could be seen as quietly controlling, but with dangerous risk taking, methods need to be subtle, rather than autocratic. For the Principal from the Girls’ College, the main way for students to be informed about risk taking was to use “the pastoral care system” and the influence of the chaplain and chapel services, whilst the Vice Principal suggested the benefits of “Health Days, Teacher Support Groups, individual counselling and referrals to outside professionals”.

Both teacher respondents felt that teachers and students could achieve much by discussing and listing the positive and negative risks in activities that each person had undertaken. Admission by the teachers of “engaging in dangerous activities” such as drink/driving should be followed with the reasons as to why they had taken their stance. The second teacher emphasised that teachers must not “lecture”

the students, but they can advise them, using their own experiences and the consequences they encountered. Students may see the revelations as quite confronting, but should accept the admission of risky behaviour from the teachers.

There are risks [out there], so confront them. Talk through them. Recognize that peer pressure can be a risk. Be informed about the good feelings that may be engendered-these in risk taking and drug use can be short term. The downsides can be long term.

(Teacher 2, Interview).

In a similar fashion to the teachers, the parents felt that they should also relate examples from their own adolescent lives, even the angst in some of the situations. One parent did not want to wrap her female children in “cotton wool” because having a risk-free life is not desirable. Stressing the choices available and the outcomes of the risky activities was a better approach. The “cotton wool” example would not appeal to the participants, as they definitely desire more freedom.

The parents also emphasised having a good, open relationship with their teenagers, starting very early in their lives, as being necessary. Parents needed to discuss a wide range of issues, openly, freely and with “non-judgmental attitudes”. Assistance should also be given to “the type of friends” the children make, along with positive feedback about them. Parents should also help children to develop understanding and the ability to verbalize about the types of people “they like or do not like”.

Being good role models as parents and not “prudish” about the more controversial topics is another strategy. Avoidance of dictatorial, negative statements such as “Don’t do that!” is also good advice from parents. Another good strategy is to view “teenager television” and read their literature, using both avenues as starting points to discuss key aspects. Encouraging healthy choices in life is necessary.

Again, parents suggest several strategies to control their adolescents, the most important one being the open, non-confrontational type.

It is also important “to keep the channels of communication open with your child” and to perhaps share some of their experiences of drug taking with them. The positive and negative results and the admission of parents having “made mistakes” were some of the suggestions for remediation. The Principal warned that informing the student about negative risk taking can be “counter productive” and only a few examples of these would be useful through the guest speaker programme and also the Chapel services.

The two parents had very diverse views as to how schools should educate students about the legal and social ramifications of negative risk taking activities. The first parent response concurred with the educational approach, particularly with issues around relationships and sexual health, but also with addictions and drug taking. The second parent emphasised “the story telling” from adults who regret the choices that they made as young persons. The method here was to utilize experiential examples even from “the parents”, in addition to allowing them freedom to develop themselves, but with caution as to the outcomes of their decisions. These have a much better impact on the students than those lessons from a teacher or health worker and are more powerful and work more effectively than the advice from an expert. The conviction was that we listen and attend more to the stories and experiences of the people we know, particularly if they have overcome difficulties and are leading successful lives. For the range of controls placed on the participants in relation to the list of risk taking activities, the administrators, teachers and parents had very practical suggestions, rather than a “Thou shalt not!” approach. With alcohol use, the administrators suggested minimizing the harm it can cause and seeking counselling if alcohol was a problem. With Drink Driving, the administrators “recommended avoidance” and “having counselling” about the dangers inherent with this activity. The parents

agreed with the avoidance of the drink drivers, urging the participants “to call taxis” or “parents”. They also emphasised the death and injury associated with drink-driving. The teachers concentrated on the loss of licences and making good decision about their activities.

To stop adolescents speeding, the administrators’ focus was to retell case histories of injuries and to suggest driver education programmes. Again, the parents agreed that case histories, involving injury, could warn the adolescent to refrain from speeding in cars. One teacher reminded the participants to assess the risks involved, whilst the second one chose a monetary deterrent with the cost of fines to warn them. The “injury and death” stories would have the most impact when compared to the other advice.

The drug advice from both administrators relied on the participants’ thinking of the consequences, which could follow this activity, with one also advising them to resist peer pressure. One teacher agreed that the long-term consequences were the main problem. The parents had two entirely different suggestions about drug taking, with one stressing “personal safety” and the other emphasizing the need to make “the right choices of activities”.

The ideas concur on several points, such as avoiding drink driving, using case histories about driving accidents to deter students from speeding, resisting the peer group, understanding the risks and sharing the consequences of one’s actions.

One type of strategy for schools, from the school Principal, was to have strong curriculum initiatives where trained teachers in the Health and Physical Education area were able to provide age appropriate, learning experiences. Again the best strategy was a Health Forum that Year 10 students conducted each year for the parents in the Church founded College, about adolescent issues including drugs. There was a 95 percent attendance rate at this from parents. The Vice Principal

emphasised the “full service” nature of her College where the student had a wide variety of professional people available for support, both on and off site.

The key for one teacher was to provide information about the risks being targeted. This could be a part of providing a climate of self-confidence, which should be encouraged and actively pursued by all students. The second teacher respondent felt that setting a good example with no smoking, drinking to excess or taking recreational drugs was a good starting point. Being willing to listen to students talking about these issues, was another strategy, along with the non-judgemental attitude.

6.4.5 Resilience Measures for Students

Participation in outdoor-education programmes should give a positive self-regard to adolescents, according to the Principal in this survey. The adults who participated in the survey indicated that students should engage in a wide set of outdoor activities, such as “outdoor education”, creating challenges, more than the normal type offered to their age group. The intent was to collate all the additional subjects and activities suggested, so that the participants could see that they were building up resilience by moving away from their normal activities and attempting the challenge of new experiences.

The Principal felt that it was necessary in the first instance to provide a secure environment where “positive risk taking” was encouraged and supported, with their Outdoor Education Program being an example. The provision of guest speakers during classes and in Assemblies was another avenue of support. The administrators felt that one strategy for schools would be to provide strong curriculum initiatives where trained teachers in the Health and Physical Education area are able to provide age appropriate, learning experiences. The Vice Principal emphasised the “full service” support nature of her College where the student had

a wide variety of professional people available, to discuss any drug or related issue.

This support comes in many “packages” which can range from working with individuals, with small groups, in classrooms, on excursions, in meetings, at socials...in partnerships with community.

(Administrator 2, Interview).

The key for one teacher was to provide information about the risks being targeted. This could be a part of providing a climate of self-confidence about asking questions, which should be encouraged, and actively pursued by all students. The second teacher respondent felt that setting a good example with “no smoking, drinking to excess or taking recreational drugs” was a good starting point. Being willing to listen to students talking about these issues, was another strategy, along with a non-judgemental attitude. Health Education in schools also provided much information for students.

To all this, the Principal respondent added the need to use a strong resilience program within the school. The Vice Principal used curriculum choices, such as subjects like Sport and Recreation or Health Days, Teacher Support Groups, individual counselling and providing professionals from agencies within the community to give support and to build up resilience. The Vice Principal’s College would also provide Professional learning for staff, information stands (displaying key pamphlets), Assemblies, guest speakers and class discussions to transfer the necessary information regarding negative risk taking activities.

Both teachers advocated that the schools should provide education in this field. One felt that it all should be curriculum based, according to the needs of the students. The other respondent felt that schools were already providing a great deal in this area, particularly with arranging guest speakers, from all backgrounds, to address the problems. However, there was a warning that schools could only do

so much and that parents “should not abrogate the responsibility to inform their children”.

6.5 Conclusion

The survey of personnel working or living with adolescents, suggests that the approach to the education of this group, about risk in society, is very diverse. Administrators, teachers and parents rely on an array of school and community based curriculum initiatives, Health Forums, Outdoor Education programme, the use of experts and “storytelling”. All adults, especially parents, should be receptive listeners to adolescents and discussions should be frank, honest and non-judgemental. With the decline of interest in religion, there is little emphasis on morals and always listening to a conscience, but there are the strategies of making demands on the adolescents to think about their lives, to plan their goals and to aspire to their highest levels, so that they can make creative contributions to society and be in positive relationships with others.

The analysis of the Australian and State policies will form the basis of Chapter 7. The final Chapter 8 will reflect upon the findings in this study, in comparison to all the Literature Research and the findings from the analyses of the qualitative and quantitative data in Chapters 4 and 5, the Interview Survey in Chapter 6 and the discussion about the Australian and States’ Policies on risk taking activities, pertinent to this study, in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7**DATA ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT****AND STATE POLICIES****7.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, an analysis is provided about the relevant Australian educational policy documents, addressing the risk taking activities in this study, as outlined by the Australian government and each Australian state. These revolve around drugs and alcohol use and abuse, and sexual activity, including the viewing of X-Rated (pornographic) videos. The focus is to understand the implications the policies will have for the education of adolescents, particularly females and the imposition any curricula changes and demands will make on the capability of each state's education system to manage these changes and demands.

Before discussing these policies in detail, the first part of the process involves a discussion of the issues implicit in the analyses of policy documents. Then the policies, which govern the funding and implementation of educational programmes in Australian schools and communities, will be analysed using the five Research Objectives designed for this study, as outlined in Chapter 1. There will also be a supplementary Research Objective (RO7) to cover the Policy Document analysis. This Research Objective is important, as it will assist in determining the effectiveness of the policies in relation to educating Australian adolescents about the ramifications of engaging in the negative risk taking activities in this study.

- RO7. (a) To examine the policies of Education Authorities in relation to the Risk Taking of Adolescents.**
- (b) To examine the practicality of the policies in regard to economic, resource base, curricula and time considerations.**
- (c) To consider the implications for teachers.**
- (d) To consider their coherence, noting similarities and differences.**

7.1 Background to Policy Analysis

The policies analysed in this chapter were collected from electronic searches and were collated into the three main areas in this study, namely alcohol and drug use and abuse and sexual activity (including the viewing of pornography). There were twenty-three documents in all. To analyse these policy documents in a general sense, it is necessary to determine some guidelines.

A key policy objective in OECD countries is the “improving of the quality of education” in response to demands to provide life long learning opportunities available for all” (OECD, 2003, p. 1). However, even the word policy can have different connotations.

One person’s policy is another person’s rule and another person’s strategy.

(Australian Health Promoting School Association, 1997, p. 3).

Policy research indicates that without clearly articulated policy, planning, and dissemination, the utilization of the core concepts by the target audience is severely inhibited (AHPSA, 1997, p. 3).

Policies therefore, need to be user friendly, to give good guidance to the target audience, such as private sectors and consumers and should not give too much detail. For the stakeholders, the length is important, as is the tone, the extent to which it will be published and the interpretation given to the issues within the guidelines. It must be remembered that any policy “is...not the law” and is only “a tool to aid understanding” (Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner, 2001, p. 1). Additionally it must be noted that governments have alternate options of writing policies or programmes, with varying merits and costs implicit in finding the “right course”, one which may not be popular.

When issues emerge, and start “to demand government attention”, the policy development and process begins to become the focus. A “range of options”, involving the choice of policy instruments and their implementation methods into organisations, exists when feasibility is considered (Queensland Government, 2008, p. 1). Ministers in governments and their officials have to assess the topics to be written about and the options for managing them. Ministers of Governments also make the final decisions about what needs to be done and they authorize administrative actions, but these ministers can be influenced by policy practitioners who have the “expertise, experience and knowledge” (Queensland Government, 2008, p. 1). The public must be informed and the groups, which need the policies, in this case Australian and the States’ schools. The efforts to disseminate the ideas and approaches should be open to question and the policies must be “robust and transparent” (BSE Inquiry, 2000, p. 1). Edwards and Stuart (1994) contended:

It may often be more relevant therefore, to judge advisors by the quality of processes and the breadth of omission of advice, than the ultimate decisions of government.

(as cited in Queensland Government, 2008, p. 1).

There are many questions one can ask about the formulation of policy documents. They include ascertaining what type of policy document it is, why it was composed and who had written it. The context also needs to be determined as well as the intended audiences. The type of assumptions and values being communicated will indicate the purpose of one body, be it a “legislature, a political party, a labour union” or other institutions or individuals (Dickinson Education, 2008, p. 1). With this information, we can then decide upon trusting and learning from it (Dickinson Education, 2008, pp. 1-2).

7.2 Australian and State Policies

The general approach in the major Australian Government policy documents concerning alcohol and drug use and abuse and the sexual activity categories,

is to place all the specific topics under overarching philosophical approaches, which aim to educate the students from holistic perspectives, such as gender, resilience, health and wellbeing. They were certainly designed to improve the quality of education and to create a long term learning process about caring for one's health. The Australian documents gave general information and were referred to in a variety of terms, such as principles, guidelines or terms of reference and policies. The State policies, in contrast, actually detail the type of curricula, legal rules and regulations, the training of teachers and community involvement, which are needed, to complete the process of their implementation into each state education system. There did not appear to be any problem with the dissemination of the policies from the national perspective, but other publications such as journals and newspaper articles provide further insight into or criticism about the policies.

The Australian policies are designed to view the whole picture of adolescent risk taking from an holistic health and safety point of view, whereas the states have to be very specific about the risky behaviours, detailing strict rules and intervention with curricula courses regarding all negative risks, and suggested sanctions or preventative strategies. Governments would be the institutions to recognize the type of policies needed and the information to be included in them, while policy makers would be the personnel chosen to write the policies on the national level. The dissemination of the policies would be the role of the national educational bodies, whilst in the states' contexts, coordinators and teachers would be involved with the interpretation of them on the local scene.

All the policies were easy to read and interpret and were mostly only a few pages in length, except for the *Queensland Promoting Positive Gender Relationships* which was very long with thirty-four pages and the *Gender and School Education* for Tasmania at nine pages. They were all "transparent" with the only factor to prevent the "robust" nature of them being the lack of funding promised for each state. Without the funding, provided by the Australian government, the state programmes would falter and there would be many omissions in the amount of knowledge and skills passed onto the students in each state.

This situation of the national group, writing from an holistic perspective and the state from a particular point of view, concurs with the relationship of the national government with the Australian states. In many facets of Australian life, the national government provides guidelines, but leaves the states to interpret them according to their needs. These arrangements assume that all states will incorporate the policies, not only as the Australian government intended, but also with a view to accommodating each state's needs.

7.3 Research Objectives

RO1. To determine the concept of “self” in adolescent females, the adolescent females’ aspirations for the future and their risk taking attitudes.

To relate all the policies to this Objective, the analysis will focus on all the aspects within the documents which complement the ability of the female adolescents to gain a sense of “self”. This will include such topics as the overall aim of the policies on drugs and alcohol, the health issues involved with the abuse of these and gender identity considerations.

One recurring theme from the Australian and State policies, significant and relevant to this Objective is that there is an emphasis on student wellbeing. One Tasmanian document *State Drug Education Strategy* (2007) has the potential to draw together all the additional programs in one package including “National Strategies on Sexual Health, Mental Health Drug Education and Youth Suicide Prevention” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 2).

First, [there is the] whole school philosophy in relation to student well being, the umbrella under which all other elements of the action plan sits [to] provide strategies for increasing the resilience of students through addressing risk factors and enhancing protective behaviour.

(Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p.1).

Addiction to drugs is considered to be a chronic disease and without treatment, self-improvement in health and wellbeing is a less achievable option (Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services, 2005, p. 2). This latter document also emphasises that alcohol can also cause brain and liver damage and even such mild stimulants as caffeine can have pronounced toxic effects. Addiction to any type of drug is considered to be a chronic disease with serious “adverse effects” on users “the most serious” being death (Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services, 2005, p. 2). The New South Wales Education and Training Department *Drugs in Schools Policy*, (2000) complements these warnings with instructions for schools to manage the use of “inhalants/solvents” as a “student welfare and health issue” (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 1). The Victorian Education Department suggests the following.

The [research] paper argues that the classroom drug education programs should exemplify, both good pedagogy and good health promotion practice and be informed by the evidence - base relating to effective drug education.

(Victorian School Drug Education, 2006, p. 1).

It also argues for a whole government response to drug related issues. There is also a link to a later document *Engaging Parents* (2007), with a list of resources, some in foreign languages, to assist parents to engage in school drug education to assist their children (The Victorian Department of Education, 2006, p. 1). The three main areas of the *Drug Education* (2006) policy, which schools are asked to integrate, include “Health Education, Student Health and Student Care” (The Victorian Department of Education, 2006, p. 1). All of these policies could assist the adolescents to maintain their health and wellbeing, so that they can develop their best “sense of self” and aspirations for the future.

Education Queensland had a similar focus with their policy *Drug Education and Intervention in Schools* (2006) to guide educators and schools in their delivery of drug education programs. This policy also has links to other

documents such as *Creating Smoke Free Environments* and *HIV/AIDS Education* web sites. The main policy has the aim of “harm minimization” in relation to drug use (Education Queensland, 2006, p. 1). In South Australia, the policy document *Drugs and schools: Administrative Instructions and Guidelines* (2007) emphasises that the health, safety and welfare of all students must be assured and school management plans about “drug-related incidents” must be implemented, to create an environment complementing wellness in students (South Australia Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2007, p. 2).

The Australian Government has issued a sex education resource in the form of a video called *Girls, boys and sex* (2002). The issues discussed in this video concern sexuality, sexual identity, first time sex and safe sex. It takes a very flexible approach to the issue of sexuality with its purpose “To cover sexuality in a fun, yet informative way” (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002, p. 1).

The Tasmanian Education Department provided a lengthy educational support document on gender and associated sexuality, titled *Gender and School Education* (2007). It explores the ways in which girls and boys learn about gender and how it affects “interpersonal relationships”. The contents were from the findings in a report on a national study of pupils aged six to ten, from both public and private schools, about “gender construction”. This study had “asked the same questions of and about boys and girls” as the issues were considered the same” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 2). Ten of the systems and 60 percent of the teachers used gender “inclusive curricula” to assist the sense of identity in students (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 7). The report concludes with assertions as to its effectiveness.

This study offers considerable evidence that attention to gender issues by systems, schools and individual teachers does make a difference to gender experiences of students in schools.

(Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, pp. 8-9).

The document *Gender and School Education* (2007) also raises the problem of peer group pressure related to gender. There are many problems, highlighted in this document, relating to harassment, both physical and psychological, with name-calling, including the connotative lesbian and gay labels. The physical included “embarrassing touching, pinching or interference with clothes” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 3). Other matters of concern for the wellbeing of females were the lack of safety in female toilets and the lack of suitable provision for menstruation and for older adolescents, facilities for girls with babies (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 6).

The New South Wales policy *Girls and Boys at School Gender Equity Strategy* 1996-2001 emphasised four focus areas. In Focus area One, the need was for teachers to address gender as an educational issue as it is in the “best interest of both girls and boys” (Discussed in RO7c) (New South Wales Department of Education, 1996, p. 3). Focus area Two concentrated on the sense of self for each child in relation to the “constructive relations...between the sexes” (New South Wales Department of Education, 1996, p. 5). Sets of questions were posed to indicate the best practice including “Are the achievements and interests of girls and boys equally valued, visible and resourced?” (New South Wales Department of Education, 1996, p. 5). In Focus Area Three success would be achieved if the following were obtained:

[If] the number of schools involving parents and caregivers...(in) discussions about the impact of gender on the attitudes, behaviours and life choices of their children were also greater in number.

(New South Wales Department of Education, 1996, p. 5).

Another Tasmanian gender support document for schools and educators, *Sexuality and the Individual* (2007) specifies the major influences, which affect gender construction. Those students who are homosexual may believe that lesbian and or homosexual feelings “are sinful, immoral or inferior” to anyone who is heterosexual. These internalized feelings have behaviour ramifications as students may diminish their sense of “self” and “may hide

their sexuality” and “decrease their expectations of life” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1).

RO2. To determine the amount of personal control, evident in the adolescent girls’ lives in their younger years and their attitudes regarding the law, legal restrictions and adult authority.

For this Research Objective the types of controls and the measures to increase the levels of understanding and behaviour of young adolescents with risky behaviour involving drugs, alcohol and sexuality form the focus. The aspects covered include guidelines, policies and practices for drug use and control. Procedures for Principals and Police Notification are addressed, as are the aims to develop student knowledge skills and values in tandem with attitude change. Alcohol rules, as applied to schools, are defined, as are conciliation and arbitration processes concerning sexuality and gender identity.

A support document for The Australian National School Drug Education Strategy (2004), *Principles for drug education in schools* (2007) is available for all states, including Tasmania. One focus for the State versions of the drug policy is to create a whole school philosophy to bring about attitude change in young people. However, this version of the Australian national policy document includes many guidelines in the policy to create a culture based on equity and obedience to the law and legal restrictions in educational communities. The policy emphasises the philosophical and cultural approach, which includes the need to promote “a safe, supportive and inclusive environment...[with] collaborative relationships between students, staff, families and the broader community” to prevent damage to the personal lives of students through a disregard for illegal drug use and drug related harm (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). This also includes the use of consistent policies and practices to inform and manage responses to drug related incidents. The Tasmanian version also states that teachers should consider the role of teachers in drug education.

Ensure that teachers are resourced and supported in their central role in delivering drug education programs [and] use student-centred interactive strategies to develop the student's knowledge, skills and values...with real life contexts and challenges.

(Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1).

The New South Wales Department of Education and Training, *Drugs in Schools Policy* (2000) states specifically the manner in which Principals must arrange disciplinary matters regarding the use of suspected illegal substances, these being consistent with the *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students-Procedures*, included in the policy. Likewise teachers must be proactive, by supporting this policy in schools and “are expected to inform the Principal when they have reasonable grounds to suspect a student is involved in drug related behaviours” (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 1). Principals must also arrange disciplinary matters involving alcohol consistent with the *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students-Procedures*, as with other illegal substances. (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 2). The Western Australian policy on alcohol, *Summary: Alcohol on School Premises* (2004), is much more euphemistic.

The availability and consumption of alcohol on school premises needs to be carefully managed. Schools have a duty to ensure that the supervision of students is appropriate at all times and that reputation of the school is not damaged by inappropriate behaviour at social functions.

(West Australian Dept. of Education and Training, 2004, p. 1).

In the South Australian policy document, *Drugs and schools: Administrative Instructions and Guidelines* (2007), intervention at both the State and school level is advocated as it “assists the schools to develop their own drug policy in partnership with the school community” (South Australia Department of Education and Children's Services, 2007, p. 11).

Illegal and unsanctioned drug use is prohibited. The role of the Principal and his legal role using “natural justice” or “procedural fairness” is outlined together with a generic set of rules which can be applied to a wide set of situations where a person’s rights and interests may be affected (South Australia Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2007, p. 2).

The South Australian document also places legal restrictions when searching for illicit drugs. This may only be carried out when other students are placed in risk situations, but searches by police could involve dogs “to sniff” out the evidence, so caution against this is noted and the inherent risks are also listed and discussed (South Australia Department of Education, 2007, p. 5).

A second Tasmanian document *Departmental Guidelines and Policy on Drugs in Schools Alcohol* (2007) states very succinctly that the consumption of alcohol by people “under the age of 18” is not permitted on school premises (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1). Other considerations include guidelines for school related activities such as excursions, camps, discos or end of year dinners, with warnings for teachers who “must take a responsible attitude towards their alcohol consumption” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1). A similar stance is taken in the New South Wales document, *Drugs in School Policy* (2000).

Alcohol must not be consumed or brought to school premises during school hours [or at] school functions including those outside school premises.

(N.S.W Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 1).

In the Tasmanian Education Department’s report on the National study of pupils, aged six to ten, from both public and private schools, *Gender and School Education* (2007) it emphasised that in many of the schools surveyed, principals, teachers and female respondents stated that they were very clear about the policies and procedures regarding sex-based harassment. However, it was noted by 40 percent of Year 6 and 45 percent of Year 10 that “nothing happens” when a student complained about sex-based harassment. A “code of

silence” can eventuate, if this persists (Tasmanian Education Department, 1996, p. 1).

There are two Acts of Parliament, namely the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act 1998, declaring all discrimination illegal. Mechanisms for reporting such behaviours are noted, including such authorities as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (Federal) or the Anti-Discrimination Commission (State). Failing these, an Institute of TAFE Tasmania (2006) reference is available, advising that conciliation resolutions or a tribunal hearing can be accessed (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, pp. 1-2).

The New South Wales policy *Girls and Boys at School Gender Equity Strategy* 1996-2001, (1996) stated their purpose of schooling.

The purpose of schooling is to expand the ways in which young people can understand themselves and others and the society we share, so that they are not constrained by irrational, outmoded or damaging ways of dealing with sex differences.

(New South Wales Department of Education. 1996, p. 1).

The Queensland Education Department’s policy and procedures paper on *HIV/AIDS Education* (2007) stated, “Direct access to students during critical stages of their development ensures schools play an important part in developing balanced attitudes and responsible behaviour in young people” (Queensland Department of Education and the Arts, 2007, p. 2).

The Western Australian policy on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis (2005) is designed “to assist schools and work places to develop practices that prevent or minimize the spread of HIV and hepatitis” (Western Australian Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). It requires employees to inform students about specific matters relating to the prevention, transmission and reporting of these diseases” (Western Australian Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). A critique from South Australia, examining the homophobic nature of South

Australia's Education attitudes, discussed sexual issues in *Drawing the Line: Sex Education and Homosexuality in South Australia* (1985).

[This policy] highlighted the more traditional approach to sexual education, whereby homosexuality served as a boundary marker, defining the content and extent of school-based education in that State.

(Australian Journal of Politics and History, 1999, pp. 1-2).

In *Questions and answers about sexism* (1997) published by the Tasmanian Department of Education, disclosures are made about the amount of sex-based harassment there is in schools around Australia. "Behaviour related to one's sex happens frequently in schools. Labelling boys as gay...whilst labelling girls lesbian is widespread, but less commonplace" (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). Sexual harassment is also dealt with and victims and victimization are noted and controls are designated with specific school policies and procedures (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). A whole school approach is advocated, "to support a non-discriminatory school environment" (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 3).

RO3. To determine the amount of expectations placed on the adolescent females, by themselves, their families, their schools and their communities in their earlier years.

There is also a focus in the Tasmanian Drug Policy, the *National Drug Education Project, Tasmania* (2007) about relationships:

- caring and supportive relationships with other people;
- high family and community expectations for young people's behaviour;
- opportunities for participation in meaningful activity; and
- to practise social skills.

(Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, pp. 1-2).

The South Australian document. *Drugs and schools: Administrative Instructions and Guidelines* (2007) emphasises the following fact:

The community needs to see the school acting firmly and with regard to illegal drug issues.

(Sth. Australian Dept. of Education & Children's Services, 2007, p. 6).

RO4. To determine whether adolescent females are resilient to adversity in their lives.

Resilience is defined by Wolin and Wolin (1999), as quoted in the Tasmanian document, as the capacity to “bounce back from adversity” (as cited in *National Drug Education Project, Tasmania* (2007) (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). This resilience also has elements such as connectedness and belonging, which are factors reducing substance use and subsequent harm, in young people. School policies should make provision for the formation of relationships with other types of people, encourage high family and community expectations about the types of behaviour desirable for young people, and provide support for them to participate in activities which are beneficial and consistent with the development of social skills.

In an attempt to build up resilience, the Tasmanian Education report on a national survey of students from Grade 6 to 10 across Australia *Gender and School Education* (2007) emphasised strategies, which could be seen as creating new experiences and resilience for females, by taking non-traditional subjects with many females suggesting that being supported by females was beneficial in these endeavours. There were discrepancies, though, with such topics as parenting “with only 50 percent of secondary girls...[being] taught anything” about this topic, giving them no support or resilience for later experiences in life. There was a similar situation with the need for both sexes to learn about sharing unpaid work in the home and community (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 8). A New South Wales policy, *Girls and Boys at School Gender Equity Strategy 1996-2001* (1996) included the following statement:

Enhanced and balance participation and performance of girls and boys on all aspects of computer and information technology and...in all other subject areas, including...extracurricula areas.

(New South Wales Department of Education. 1996, p. 4).

Creating new experiences with a wide variety of school endeavours, could provide resilience to cope with new challenges.

RO5. To determine the evidence of the need to “sensation seek” in the lives of adolescent girls and their perceptions of their risk-taking activities.

In this section, the focus is on ascertaining the types of risks, which could lead students into “sensation seeking”, with risky substances or behaviours.

The New South Wales Department of Education and Training, *Drugs in Schools Policy*, (2000) provides a detailed list of dangerous substances which could apply to adolescents in their “sensation seeking” and risky lifestyles.

This policy covers the possession and use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and the misuse of over-the counter and prescribed medications, inhalants and solvents, including the supply of restricted substances on school premises by students.

(N.S.W. Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 1).

An Education Queensland policy and procedures paper on *HIV/AIDS Education* (2007) provides students with relevant and appropriate education programmes about the health issues with risky sexual behaviour throughout their time at school. Its intent is to educate young people in schools about how to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. It supports a collaborative, coordinated approach to educating students about the prevention of HIV/AIDS through the school curriculum “given its responsibility for promoting and protecting the health of students and other members of the school community” (Queensland Department of Education and the Arts, 2007, p. 1).

A single lecture or presentation about AIDS will not be sufficient to ensure that students develop the complex understanding and skills needed to avoid infection. Outside experts may be needed to support teachers, but they should be culturally appropriate and used only to supplement the teacher.

(Queensland Department of Education and the Arts, 2007, p. 1).

Students can turn “to drugs and alcohol to numb the pain” of being labelled as homosexual as indicated in the support document for Tasmanian Schools, *Sexuality and the Individual* (2007) (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 3).

RO7. (a) To examine the policies of Education Authorities in relation to the Risk Taking of Adolescents.

The policies fall into two categories - those of a general nature and those with more specific concerns, regulations and strategies to alleviate the negative risk taking activities amongst adolescents. The Australian Government initiative *Drug Policy in Schools* (1994) and revised for all states, including Tasmania in *Principles for drug education in schools* (2007), contains the desired philosophical and cultural environment needed for all schools (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1). This drug education should also be appropriate, address local needs, values and priorities and acknowledge that a range of risk and protective factors impact on health, influencing choices about drug use.

The Commonwealth of Australia protocols for responding to drug related incidents in the school have been released and are critical for the underpinning of the project. The aim is to achieve a national consistency with all responses in the school community and with the professionals working within this area, such as drug service providers, guidance officers and social workers and police. It has one additional significance in that being an “umbrella focus” on student wellbeing, it will have the potential to pull additional programs together in one package, not yet covered by the Commonwealth. This package will include “*National Strategies on Sexual Health, Mental Health, Drug*

Education and Youth Suicide Prevention [and] can use the same language and philosophies as other school focus programs such as *Supportive School Environments, Health Promoting Schools and Supportive School Communities*” (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 2).

Underpinning the Tasmanian Drug Policy, is the *National School Drug Project, Tasmania* (2007). This document stresses that education about drugs is more than drug education. It is about “supporting young people to manage a world in which drugs are an everyday reality” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1). All initiatives in the Tasmanian Education system “focus more on the bigger picture’ to provide the “supportive and inclusive environments in the school and surrounding community [to] promote resilience in young people” (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1).

This resilience also has elements such as connectedness and belonging which are factors, which help to reduce substance use and subsequent harm in young people. To support this approach, distinct types of programmes need to be collaboratively developed with partnerships. These partnerships should make provision for high community expectations for young people’s behaviour, with opportunities being made for them to engage in worthwhile activities and to develop skills of all kinds which will assist their entry into society.

[The intent is] “to recognize, integrate with and enhance existing school initiatives, in all the school sectors, namely Government, Catholic and Independent [and] at all levels from kindergarten to secondary colleges.

(Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1).

The complementary support document *State Drug Education Strategy* (2007) has the dual focus of providing educational programs and supportive environments with a *whole school philosophy* to bring about behaviour and attitude change in young people. The strategies for achieving this change will involve increasing the resilience of students by focusing on school policy and protocols, setting up processes to support students with drug problems, fostering family and community involvement in the school in relation to drug

issues and student engagement strategies and practices (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1).

This New South Wales Policy *Drugs in Schools* Policy (2000) sets out requirements for schools to plan and implement appropriate resources concerning their responses to drug related incidents. As with other policies, there is an emphasis on prevention through drug education and safe and supportive school environments and intervention and support for the students involved. This policy is more comprehensive than those in the other states because it covers a more detailed list of dangerous substances, including alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and “the misuse of over-the counter and prescribed medications, inhalants and solvents, including the supply of restricted substances on school premises by students”. This policy comes under the Occupational Health and Safety Policy and does not apply to lawful and the responsible use of prescribed or other medication (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 13).

Education Queensland has twelve principles to guide the schools on drugs and sets of responsibilities for Principals and the Central Education Office. The principles involve implementing curricula, aligning it with the policy and incorporating it into forward planning and reporting procedures relating to minimizing drug related harm (Education Queensland, 2006, p. 2).

An Education Queensland policy and procedures paper on *HIV/AIDS Education* provides for students to have the relevant and appropriate education programs about these health issues throughout their time at school. It supports a collaborative, coordinated approach to educating students about the prevention of HIV/AIDS within the school curriculum, given “its responsibility for promoting and protecting the health of students and other members of the school community”.

A very detailed policy document from the South Australian Department of Education and Children’s Services entitled *Drugs and schools: Administrative Instructions and Guidelines* (2007) provides procedures over a wide range of topics concerning drug use. Intervention at both the State and school level is

advocated as it “assists the schools to develop their own drug policy in partnership with the school community” (South Australian Education Department, 2007, p. 11). Illegal and unsanctioned drug use is outlined. Principals’ roles are also noted.

Natural justice or... ‘procedural fairness’ is a set of rules applied to a wide range of situations where action may be taken where a person’s rights and interests are to be affected.

(South Australian Education Department, 2007, p. 2).

The health, safety and welfare of all students must be assured and a school management plan about drug related behaviours must be implemented. School behaviour policies must be established in partnership with local communities and the South Australian Police where possession is an issue.

A very brief Tasmanian policy statement on this topic is available as *Departmental Guidelines and Policy on Drugs in Schools: Alcohol* (2007). It states very succinctly that the consumption of alcohol by people “under the age of 18” is not permitted on school premises (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). No student under the influence of alcohol is permitted to be at school or to possess or drink alcohol whilst at school or at school-related activities such as excursions, camps, discos or end of year dinners. “Non-alcoholic beverages should be available at school activities” and teachers, whilst undertaking duty of care, “must take a responsible attitude towards their alcohol consumption” (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1).

These on site alcohol rules also apply to all employees, students, visitors and other personnel in New South Wales. Principals must arrange disciplinary matters involving alcohol, consistent with the Suspension and Expulsion of School Students-Procedures as with other illegal substances (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 2).

The topic of gender and associated sexuality is discussed in a lengthy educational support Tasmanian document titled *Gender and School Education*

(2007). It outlines a study involving four hundred and eight schools across Australia, obtaining data from government, Catholic and Independent sectors, undertaken through the auspices of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs' Schools and Gender Equity Taskforces. The data provided forms the baseline against which progress is being implemented for the *National Policy for the Education of Girls* can be judged. The document *Gender and School Education (2007)* explored many aspects of this topic including the difficulties for policy makers who have concerns for what girls and boys learn about gender and how it affects interpersonal relationships, now and in the future, hoping that it does not "constrict or diminish their education" (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 2). The hope was that gender learning should lay the foundation for an adulthood where the dynamics between the sexes will be changing. Young people are subjected to the twin process of enduring external gender pressure and a personal pressure to make themselves acceptable in gender terms. The findings relating to sexual harassment included students being hassled because of engaging in conversation with, or showing care about, kids of the opposite sex.

Young people are put under a range of pressures to see themselves and their place in the world in certain ways because of their biological sex, and to acquire the attributes-demeanour, attitudes, behaviours-culturally associated with that sex.

(Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1).

There were much broader issues besides the actual sexual behaviour involved in the policies about gender, sexism and sexuality. In Tasmania, in an overview of a National Survey (2007), sexuality was subsumed under the differences between the sexes, homosexuality, with associated personal reactions, homophobia, violence, harassment and gender expectations. HIV/AIDS had specific programmes and first-time sex was discussed in a video. Gender construction, with the ways in which girls and boys gain knowledge and learn about their sexual orientation, together with

homosexuality, is given attention. There is also the emphasis on the dynamics between the sexes and the need for the provision of facilities for young women in schools. The need for additional provisions for both girls and boys extended to more subject and curricula choices within the schools (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1).

Another introductory resource document entitled *Background on Sexism* (1996) defines this terminology.

Sexism is sex-based discrimination, harassment and prejudice against boys and girls, men and women.

(Tasmanian Department of Education, 1996, p. 1).

This definition explains the ramifications of sexism leading to poorer outcomes for both girls and boys in schools. It encourages both sexes being involved in the decision making in all aspects of school life.

A further Tasmanian Department of Education support resource on the topic of gender and sexuality, *Questions and answers about sexism* (1997) poses several questions about sex-based harassment in our schools. These questions are also asked in an Australia-wide survey, *Gender and School Education* (2007) taken from a national sample on gender construction undertaken in private and public schools with students from Years 6 to 10.

*Behaviour related to one's sex happens frequently in schools.
Labelling boys as gay...whilst labelling girls lesbian is widespread
but less commonplace.*

(Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1).

Sexual harassment is also dealt with and victims and victimization noted and controlled with specific school policies. All of this support material emphasises the need for children to be taught respect for others and that there is “a gender construction in their schooling” (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 1).

In New South Wales the policy emphases were on Gender again as the main issue, along with equity in the education of girls. Included in the policies was the aim to decrease harassment based on gender. There was also the need for parent and community involvement and an effectiveness review after the programmes had concluded.

In Queensland the focus was on health issues being a focus through school life with a concentration on the prevention of HIV/AIDS. There was the call for experts to be engaged and recent research to be made available, to assist the implementation of the policies, along with the professional development of teachers. A suitable amount of curricula time was deemed essential, as was an evaluation process. The Western Australian emphasis was on the prevention of HIV/HEPATITIS, whilst in South Australia, there was evidence that previous policies had ensured that the prevailing heterosexual norms remained the defining parameters for sex education.

Policies from South Australia were critiqued in *Drawing the Line: Sex Education and Homosexuality in South Australia* (1985). This paper “highlighted the more traditional approach to sexual education whereby homosexuality served as boundary marker defining the content and the extent of school based education in that State” (Australian Journal of Politics and History, 1999, pp. 1-2).

RO7 (b) To examine the practicality of the policies in regard to economic, resource base, curricula and time considerations.

The Tasmanian *Principles for drug education in schools* (2007), common to all states, includes the use of consistent policies and practices to inform and manage responses to drug related incidents and risks. It also impresses upon the states the need to base the drug program on “sound theory and current research and use evaluation to inform decisions...to minimize drug-related harm” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1). The educational drug programme should be located within curriculum frameworks and provide timely and ongoing drug education. Funding for the strategy totals \$47.5 million from the Australian Government, some spent in 1999-2000 with the

remainder to be spent in the 2007-2008 time frame. Will more be provided with the new Labor Australian government? If funding is withdrawn, the states cannot continue because so many demands are made on education budgets, that some programs have to be abandoned.

The complementary support document *State Drug Education Strategy* (2007) continues from the four year Commonwealth initiative under the National Illicit Drug Strategy providing funding of \$134,000 for 2007 and for the next three years. Support for the drug education strategies will be in the form of State and Regional Project Officers and Regional Coordinating Committees, Regional Project Officers and “funding to assist them to review/develop comprehensive responses to broad drug issues within the school community” (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 2).

The Australian Department of Education, Science and Training had agreed to provide funding to all Victorian schools. This funding was to actively engage students in drug education forums and is still available until 2008. There are also links provided for students to gain an information kit. The Department hopes that these monetary incentives will explore creative and innovative ways to approach drug education in partnership with other local organizations and their resources, as well as encouraging schools to develop a long-range change in their community (Victorian Education Department, 2006, p. 1).

A further support document was issued by the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services (2005). This was in the form of a fact sheet with definitions of all types of drugs in modern society and with information of the good and bad effects of drugs. Alcohol can cause brain and liver damage and such mild stimulants as caffeine can have pronounced toxic effects. Statistics are given for the problems, which arise from drugs, such as 6000 deaths from alcohol use, 19,000 from tobacco smoking and 100 from opiates. Those, using any form of drugs, need to be aware of their dangers. Addiction to drugs is considered to be a chronic disease and without treatment, self-improvement in health and wellbeing are less achievable options. Drugs have the most serious

“adverse effects” on users with death “the most serious” (Department of Health and Human Services, 2005, p. 2).

Education Queensland also aims to have a collaborative coordinated approach within the state as well as nationally and to assist schools to establish relevant prevention programs, with “referral, counselling and procedures for managing drug related incidents at school (Education Queensland, 2006, p. 2).

- Central Office has to develop policy and procedures for drug education and intervention in schools
- provide information and guidelines to assist schools in implementing the policy
- facilitates inter-sectorial and inter-departmental links

(Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts, 2006, p. 2).

Another policy and procedures paper HIV/AIDS Education (2007) provides links to all the relevant legislation and policy documents. Its intent is to educate young people in schools about how to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The central education office “develops the policy, disseminates [this] to districts, conducts the research-based curriculum development [and] evaluates, monitors and reports on the system wide implementation of the policy and programs” (Queensland Department of Education and the Arts, 2007, p. 3).

The policy from Western Australia on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis does provide a link to many other issues, but only one was pertinent to this study and that was alcohol (Western Australian Department of Education, 2005, p. 1).

RO7 (c) To consider the implications for teachers.

To implement the drug program under the directions of *The Tasmanian Principles for drug education in schools* (2007), the policy states that teachers should be adequately “resourced and supported” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, p. 1). The program will falter if the resources are not collated and made available to teachers before the implementation of the

educational programs. The time needed to prepare these courses would be prohibitive if allowances and provisions were not made prior to the implementation.

The complementary support document *State Drug Education Strategy* (2007) involves setting up school curricula for drug education and professional practice education for teachers. Likewise, teachers must be proactive by supporting the New South Wales Policy *Drugs in Schools* Policy (2000) as they “are expected to inform the Principal when they have reasonable grounds to suspect a student is involved in drug related behaviours” (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 3).

In the South Australian Department of Education and Children’s Services policy entitled *Drugs and schools: Administrative instructions and Guidelines* (2007), a list of contacts for key personnel has been provided. Media attention regarding students and employees and the possession, selling and provision of drugs must be reported to District Directors. The inherent risks and consequences of searches are also listed and discussed, but the policy concludes with a warning that the “community needs to see the school acting firmly and with regard to illegal drug issues” (South Australian Education Department, 2007, p. 6). These instructions, although “assisted”, give both principals and teachers the additional workload of providing the information sessions for community members. Principals in New South Wales must also arrange disciplinary matters involving alcohol, consistent with the Suspension and Expulsion of School Students-Procedures as with other illegal substances, again creating another aspect of the school workload which could also involve teachers’ time (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 2).

With regard to sexuality and gender issues, a whole school approach was advocated in a Tasmanian Department of Education, Executive Summary of *Gender and School Education* (2007), a document detailing the findings of a national survey of Australian Primary and Secondary students (Australian Council for Educational Research, (ACER) 1996) with the dissemination of

information to all participants, including essential teacher professional development, parental education and involvement. It was noted that only one half of the teachers in this survey had attended a course or courses on gender issues for schools, so this whole area still requires attention and support (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2007, p. 5). Whilst these findings provide more insight for schools and arguments for more compulsory school attendance and retention, the workload again increases for teachers as they are trained to include additional gender considerations into their curricula delivery, along with the dissemination of background material to parents.

One document *Girls and Boys at School Gender Equity Strategy* (1996-2001) stresses that schools are to examine their present approach to gender and their equitable education of girls and boys. (New South Wales Department of Education, 1996, p. 3). The whole strategy has indicators to be used for accountability, with the State Education office supporting the school in implementing the policy. System indicators of success are also outlined, with the emphasis on the annual “in-service training on the subject of gender as an educational issue”, the amount of “gender equity strategies” within school plans and the production of “curriculum material” addressing gender in Key Learning Areas.

Focus Area one is for teachers is to develop their understanding of gender as an educational issue, to seek it out and to apply it to their own educational practice. Focus Area Two concentrates on the school culture and organization to bring about “constructive relations...between the sexes, student to student, teacher to student and teacher to teacher”, again with a set of questions and system indicators to guide and lead teachers to best practice. The focus would be successful if certain indicators were tangible, such as a decrease in the incidence of “sex-based harassment, homophobia, bullying and other forms of violence”. Other indicators would be evident in the ‘balanced representation of female and male roles taken in the school community, an increase in the number of schools that support students in developing positive relationships [and] the representation of girls and boys in

school-based decision making processes” (New South Wales Department of Education, 1996, p. 5).

Focus Area 3 concentrated on the school and community with “opportunities to be provided for teachers, parents and caregivers to join in discussions about the way gender may affect attitudes, behaviours and life choices of their children”. Focus Area 4 had the expected outcome that “schools and the system would monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of this strategy to provide further strategies”. The question section queried whether all the aspects involved in the strategies had been implemented e.g. the monitoring of “attendance, participation, retention, attainment and post-school pathways of boys and girls”. The indicators required data collection and dissemination against the various indicators, with a particular examination of outcomes for particular girls and boys (New South Wales Department of Education, 1996, p. 6).

These indicators again, place the burden on the teachers to undertake comprehensive curriculum reviews, to change their teaching approaches to meet the demands of the strategies and to spend time on data collection.

RO7 (d) To consider their coherence, noting similarities and differences.

The New South Wales *Drugs in Schools* Policy (2000) is more comprehensive than those in the other states because it covers a more detailed list of dangerous substances, including alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs (p.1). The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has taken a different approach with *Drug Education* (2006) in which the policies and practices of drug prevention are underpinned by current “research that has identified the characteristics of programs that have achieved reductions in harmful use of “drugs” (Victorian Education Department, 2006, p. 1). As with other policy statements, it argues for drug education based on good health promotion practice. (Victorian Education Department, 2006, p. 1).

Other states allude to this with requirements for the professional development of teachers, but they are not as specific about the outcomes of this training for teachers in the actual classroom.

The Western Australian Department of Education and Training provides a short policy version with a document called *Summary: Alcohol on School Premises* (2004). This is more euphemistic than the Tasmanian and New South Wales policies in that it states that the consumption and availability of alcohol on school premises needs to be “carefully managed”. This may be because the age range covered by the word “training” can relate to students and also to adults over the legal age to drink, which is eighteen. Schools, specifically, have the duty to ensure that the supervision of students is appropriate at all times and that the school is not damaged with a “bad reputation” caused by inappropriate behaviour on social occasions (Western Australian Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 1).

A short document from Western Australia on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis is designed “to assist schools and work places to develop practices that prevent or minimize the spread of HIV and hepatitis” (Western Australian Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). The policy is directed at employees and not students.

It requires employees to inform students about specific matters relating to the prevention, transmission and reporting of these diseases.

(Western Australian Department of Education, 2005, p. 1).

Victoria’s Education Department schools are required to integrate their drug review and planning process into the Schools Strategic Planning every four years to take account of new research and pedagogical practices. Even this education review and planning process was to be reviewed to align with the new School Accountability and Improvement Framework. There is also a web link provided for schools to gain the up to date information on the Department’s policy and directions and support was offered to schools by Senior Program Officers for Student Wellbeing in 2006. The three main areas

of the policy listed for schools to integrate into their practices include Health Education, Student Health and Student Care and Supervision (Victorian Education, Department, 2007, p. 1).

The Tasmanian report of a National Survey of Australian students concluded that “attention to gender issues by school systems and by individual teachers does make a difference to gender experiences of students in schools” (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007, pp. 8-9). The development of self from a policy viewpoint involves guidelines about gender, sexism and sexuality. A wide range of topics is covered in all the policies, including homosexuality, homophobia, violence, harassment, the dynamics between the sexes and provision of facilities for females in school buildings with menstruation, pregnancy and motherhood.

7.4 Summary of Policies

7.4.1 Drug Policies

The Commonwealth of Australia policies were based on philosophical, cultural and educational approaches. They were based on current research, needed to apply to local needs and included many health factors. There was an emphasis on student wellbeing and creating supportive school environments, but not on all the negative risk taking activities which were the focus of this study. Speeding, drink driving and sexual practices are not specifically mentioned, but just the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

The Tasmanian drug programmes were based on the “drug reality”, that drugs were prevalent in modern society and students need to be taught resilience, to combat their involvement with addictive drugs and alcohol. Information about the dangers of drugs and medications was deemed very important, as were reporting procedures which could lead to suspension and expulsion. The emphasis was on creating adults with responsible attitudes.

7.4.2 Alcohol Policies

In New South Wales the emphasis was on the rules for the use of alcohol for students, adults and community members using Department properties.

Disciplinary measures were also disclosed, as was the need for these policies to be carefully managed. In Queensland the policy was based on twelve principles, some of which emphasized the need for future planning, information dissemination to whole school communities and again professional training for teachers, based on research provided by the central office. In Victoria there was the need to demonstrate a reduction in the incidence of harmful drug use of all kinds with health promotion and long-term changes being key components. The South Australian policy emphasized the procedures for drug searches involving students or employees and the discretion needed in managing such circumstances. This discretion would be necessary as individuals cannot be accused without sufficient evidence and searching personal property or carrying out body searches would invoke many legal issues.

7.4.3 Gender, Sexism and Sexuality Policies

There were broad issues besides the actual sexual behaviour involved in the policies about gender, sexism and sexuality. One disappointing feature of all the sexuality education was that the viewing of X-Rated videos was never mentioned as part of the sexual education in any of the policies, although it could have been implicit in other gender and sexuality topics such as the treatment and demeaning of women.

In Tasmania, in an overview of a National Survey, Gender and School Education (2007), sexuality was subsumed under the differences between the sexes, homosexuality, with associated personal reactions, homophobia, violence, harassment and gender expectations. HIV/AIDS had specific programmes and first-time sex was discussed in a video. Gender construction, with the ways in which girls and boys gain knowledge and learn about their sexual orientation, together with homosexuality, is given attention.

There was also the emphasis on the dynamics between the sexes and the need for the provision of facilities for young women in schools to cater for menstruation, early pregnancy and motherhood. The need for additional provisions for both girls and boys extended to more subject and curricula

choices. A whole school approach was advocated with the dissemination of information to all participants, including teacher professional development and parental education and involvement. Pathways of education for both girls and boys and the necessity for post compulsory school and retention statistics were also included in this holistic approach. Acts of Parliament were cited regarding conciliation and tribunal processes.

In New South Wales the policy emphases were on Gender again as the main issue, along with equity in the education of girls. Included in the policies was the aim to decrease homophobia, bullying and violence. There was also the need for parent and community involvement and an effectiveness review after the programmes had concluded.

In Queensland the focus was on health issues being a focus through school life with a concentration on the prevention of HIV/AIDS. There was the call for experts to be engaged and recent research to be made available, to assist the implementation of the policies, along with the professional development of teachers. A suitable amount of curricula time was deemed essential, as was an evaluation process. The Western Australian emphasis was on the prevention of HIV/HEPATITIS, whilst in South Australia, there was evidence that previous policies had ensured that the prevailing heterosexual norms remained the defining parameters for sex education.

7.5 Conclusion

It has been interesting to note that whilst Commonwealth and State policy have both common and diverse components, the overarching characteristics have been to promote philosophical policies which stress mainly the holistic aspects of gender, well-being and health and control of the students' behaviours, as opposed to more detailed curricula which addresses the specific problems in this study concerning drug, alcohol and sexually related negative risk taking activities.

All the national documents do provide the generic approach to the issues, but they leave the States to implement the more specific educational programmes

to inform and to curb the participation in risky behaviours. The last Chapter in this thesis, Chapter 8, will collate all the findings in the Literature Review, the Qualitative and Quantitative findings and will match them to the Objectives from Chapter 1. Discussion will be comparative in each section, commenting on expected outcomes from previous researchers and the findings from this study.

CHAPTER 8**CONCLUSION****8.0 Introduction**

The first section in this Chapter, will be dedicated to reflecting upon the outcomes of this study. This will be followed by a systematic process reviewing all the background literature, the views of the School Administrators, Teachers and Parents and the Australian policies on risk taking activities, with the aim of comparing them with the qualitative and quantitative results within the framework of the Seven Research Objectives and the Five Themes in Chapter 6.

8.1 Personal Reflections

The researcher's long teaching journey, spanning over forty years, and encompassing a wide range of teaching experiences, both in Australia and overseas, within many subject areas and age groups, from kindergarten to adult, caused her to pause and to contemplate the vast changes that had not only occurred in Australian teaching practices generally, but in the attitudes, values and expectations of the student body and the adolescent female group in particular.

The initial background reading about Adolescence painted a very negative view of young adults, with an earlier emphasis on "storm and stress" (Hall, 1904) to almost a century later, emotional "turmoil and confusion" (Heaven, 2000). More recent writings provided a more edifying attitude to the topic, describing the process of adolescence as having spiritual dimensions such as "How do I fit into the overall pattern of the universe?" (Vialle, Lysaght & Verenikina, 2005, p. 219). This concept of a spiritual dimension proved to be very inspirational to the researcher as it lifted the experience of humans to

altruistic dimensions. Having a consideration of existential issues, an elevated state of being and an effect on others, proved to be a much more stimulating and motivational position from which to reflect upon a study on adolescence and adolescent females (Vialle et al., 2005).

At the time of decision-making about the topic for this thesis, the researcher was engaged as a teacher in the Senior Secondary College with the adolescent group, from which a major part of this study has mainly been drawn. This engagement created the interest in their aspirations and attitudes to life and became a focus from which many of these changes could be assessed in juxtaposition with both their positive and risk taking activities. Tasmanian Schools were very intent at this time in making the education system very student-focused, with the College in this study, providing three strands of courses, including academic, vocational and general studies. It was interesting then, for the researcher, to reflect upon the reactions of females from a wide cross-section of the College, to the challenges of a new century, with the many opportunities available to them and with the social attitudes in Australia changing rapidly.

The Questionnaire was not only designed to investigate the negative risks which attracted the female participants, but was intended to capture a comprehensive socio-demographic 'snapshot' of the archetypical adolescent female at that time in a combined urban and rural region of Tasmania. Consequently, it included questions regarding personal, religious and family background, their interests and attitudes to school, family and local community life, together with an emphasis on their aspirations, motivation and future goals. These topics were approached first, before investigating the participants' perceptions and participation rates in the main areas of drug and alcohol use and abuse and sexual activity and related topics. Whilst much of

the introductory reading for this study had concentrated on the negative aspects of adolescence, the researcher was hopeful about disclosing, in the conclusion, many of the positive outcomes of the study and a lower level of negative risk taking than expected, in the designated areas.

The most enlightening aspect of the study was the revelation that adolescence had essentially begun as a male construct after the demise of child labour in the mines and factories of the western world following The Factory Acts before and from 1853. However, in spite of women's traditional sanctuary within the home and family, females are now experiencing greater exposure to the societies in which they live, because of educational opportunities available to all. It has been an interesting journey discovering their hopes and ambitions for the future, but also noting the liberties and the negative risk taking activities, once confined to men, becoming a part of their lives.

It was, in some aspects, frustrating to discover that the Australian policies on risk taking activities were very holistic in nature, approaching the topics from an 'umbrella' perspective of gender, wellness and general health, within supportive school environments. These policies were left to each state to design and implement, with national government funding at times, relevant and specific courses and to engage professionally trained personnel to implement them.

The funding was a very decisive factor on occasions in the actual provision of these courses, a factor which, in itself, limited the time component of each program. Some of the programs were also deemed to be too conservative with the inclusion only of heterosexual sexuality and traditional family relationships. The Senate documents were also confronting with varying legal views as to what constituted pornography, as in the X- Rated films and videos.

The literature, then, provided background about the potential malaise associated with the process of adolescence. It also explained the male and female differences experienced during this process and the effect of the peer group, which also received a great deal of attention, in the background research. What constituted risk and the attitudes surrounding risk for males and females were also factors highlighted by the published research. Concern was also expressed in the literature about risk choices and their subsequent health implications. Comparisons with the backgrounds from the associated disciplines and perspectives of psychology, sociology, the legal system, counselling, health and education were made with the corresponding findings from the survey.

The findings provide several dichotomies within this study. In contrast to the literature review, the females were not in a state of “stress” or “turmoil”, but were very motivated, ambitious and confident about their futures and not influenced in negative ways by their peers. They were not in full conflict with their parents, although mothers formed the most favoured authoritative and influential group, whilst a sizeable number of participants experienced difficulties with their fathers.

Although the education system had become student-focused and had attempted to provide all aspects deemed necessary for their future lives, the participants had not always been happy with their Senior Secondary experiences, expressing stress with the levels of study and the pressure to decide on careers. Additionally, they did not rate teachers in the “significant others” list of influential adults as highly as expected. Teachers, in this instance, were second to relatives and were mostly mentioned as being significant at particular stages of their education, not in an overall holistic sense. Very few teachers were mentioned by name, but were recorded

generally as being kind or inspirational or encouraging. The most disturbing feature of the findings was that, in spite of the participants' many positive attributes, they still felt it necessary to endanger their lives by participating in negative, risky lifestyles.

Other dichotomies occurred with regard to social capital. Many of the students were engaged in sport and music activities, but very few in the wider range of activities or clubs offered by their communities. Consequently, there was a deficit in the numbers of adults and the subsequent wider influence and experiences in the lives of these students. Whilst there was nearly a half, forty-four, of the female participants, who had never attended church, and another group of forty two, who had had no religion, there were still twenty-seven, who were not sure and were seeking some kind of answer to satisfy a spiritual need. The literature review indicated that adolescence is a time of emotional upheaval, but the survey participants seldom expressed this in their responses.

They were very strong in their opinions about conflict with fathers and that the peer group had not had a negative influence on them, but the only dramatic expression of emotion had occurred with the last question regarding the treatment of teenagers in today's society. Here, they had disclosed their anger and frustration with the attitudes of adults and society generally towards them.

The participants were angry, because they lacked power in their lives if under eighteen, as they still had to comply with adult standards, particularly living costs. They did not consider themselves lazy or indifferent to society's standards and wanted to be acknowledged for their intelligence, understanding of life's issues and to be given a chance to prove themselves.

8.2 Findings from the Research Objectives

8.2.1 Research Objective 1: The concept of “self” in adolescent females and whether the adolescent females’ aspirations for the future impinge on their risk taking activities.

The participants in this survey demonstrated that they had a heightened sense of their own identity, expressing very positive attitudes about their lives and noting being caring and kind as their best characteristics. Both the town and country participants saw themselves as being very happy and motivated individuals. Very few participants made negative comments about their personalities and some of these may not be considered as negative character traits, such as being shy.

8.2.1.1 Peer Group Influence

The participants were adamant that the peer group was not influential in their lives and that it was not responsible for their decisions or activities. They mentioned being too stubborn to be directed by others and inferred that they wanted to follow their own directions. Whilst some may have followed their peers in the past, at the College stage of their lives, they had matured and had left these influences behind. Family had a greater effect for some and mixing mainly with adults was another crucial factor in their decisions.

8.2.1.2 Family Characteristics

Nearly the whole group of these participants, seventy-eight, had two parents with only thirteen with one parent. Most lived with their two parents and reported happy relationships with them, family life giving them stability, trust, support and a close, caring environment. One participant mentioned that she

also had the influence of living with a stepfather, but saw her natural father occasionally. Another participant's mother had died and she lived with her father and a stepmother. There were only eleven single parent families and only three participants mentioned divorce or separation. Those, who lived only with fathers, reported more difficulties than those living only with mothers. Only four reported not living with either of their parents, one of whom lived with an aunt and uncle. Most of the participants were either first or second in the family, with very few in large families and a small number of four participants in the only child category. Perhaps these smaller family numbers allowed the participants to have more responsibility and more freedom to find their own sense of identity.

8.2.1.3 Attitudes to Education

The participants in this study were very motivated by education and all its opportunities. The participants had enjoyed their Primary schooling, but had mixed reactions to their Senior Secondary education, mostly because it was more difficult, more intense and their lives were fraught with making decisions about their future careers and work options. Their long list of professional ambitions also indicated their desire to continue their education and to be high achievers. Even those without the professional career aims, were motivated to achieve in other ways, such as with travel or with opening their own businesses.

8.2.1.4 Personal Aspirations

Education was very important to the majority of the participants, as was a University Degree and subsequent training, to gain successful and ongoing employment. Only nine of the survey group aimed for the traditional female careers of nursing, teaching, midwifery or child studies. They had looked into

other fields, such as being a Pilot or Physiotherapist. The participants were also very work-orientated, not only for its monetary reward, but also to experience joy and dedication to a chosen occupation. They also realized that their work choices would bring them many new experiences, some challenging and others enriching their lives. In the end they wanted to feel that they had “achieved something”, all part of their “sense of self”.

8.2.1.5 Recreational Interests

The participants were mostly engaged in sporting activities with musical activities also being popular. There had been some involvement in community groups, but with only a small number of nine with any current service club participation. Church activities were similar to the national average for religious involvement, with only approximately a quarter of the participants involved. A similar amount had an interest in hobbies (not specified), but their travel to the College and their engagement in their studies and part-time work would not have given them many opportunities for additional leisure pursuits.

8.2.1.6 Goal Achievement

A very high 80 percent of students felt that they would achieve their chosen goals, because they had great confidence in themselves and the opportunities which lay ahead of them. Only a small group saw the negative aspects of their personalities and admitted that their chances were not possible, because of their lack of motivation. Being determined to succeed, and having a high work ethic were the two characteristics the participants felt would bring them success. They also believed in their own abilities to master the next stage of their education and had support from parents. They had no problem with setting goals and were assured that they would have the opportunities to succeed. It was interesting to note that their confidence levels about success

were so high. The parental levels of education had not been as high as the goals set by these females and it would have been interesting to know what had impeded the goals of the generation before these participants.

8.2.1.7 Significant Others

The participants had input from a wide range of extended family members who provided them with support, guidance and significant contributions to enable them to become such confident students with very worthwhile goals. Most of the influence for the participants had come from female family members, but certain male relatives were named as well. It was interesting to note that there were more brothers in the students' families, a factor which could have influenced the participants to want similar lives with the freedom more associated with masculine aspirations. Teachers had the next significant input into their development, providing subject advice, encouragement and confidence to face their adult life. There was only minimal influence on the participants from community members, mainly because these students lead very busy lives with study, travel to school and often they had part-time work as well.

8.2.1.8 Summary of Research Objective 1

The participants demonstrated a very highly developed sense of self, had very high aspirations and confidence that they could achieve all that they planned to do. They were assisted by the support of mainly stable families, significant others and were not influenced by their peers. However, their risk taking was relatively high in the areas of alcohol and marijuana abuse and sexual activity. The lives the participants led were not always congruent with their risky behaviour. There was evidence of the risk taking behaviour, but the number

exposing themselves on a regular basis to risky behaviour was smaller than expected from the background literature perspective.

8.2.2 Research Objective 2: To ascertain the amount of personal control, evident in the adolescent females' lives in their younger years and their attitudes regarding the law, legal restrictions and adult authority.

8.2.2.1 Parental Control

The participants wrote generally in favour of their parents' level of control over them. There were cases where the participants had conflict with one or both parents or found it easier to comply with their parents' wishes. A small group experienced difficulties with the level of discipline and authority as well as the perceived inequality in comparisons about the treatment of their siblings and therefore, they wanted more freedom.

The mothers were the most constant parent because their fathers were often absent due to work. There were many accolades for the mothers and their socializing influences on the participants. This was not always true for the fathers who received many disparaging remarks about their levels of discipline and authoritative attitudes towards their daughters.

It was gratifying to note that the females and their parents were going through positive changes and more freedom was evident as the participants took on more responsibility for themselves.

8.2.2.2 Other Controls

Other controls in their lives were very minimal, mainly coming from the school system. Work was also a consideration, as was the boarding situation for those living in the hostels or private homes. Brothers and boyfriends could

also exert controls on the participants, as could the social security system which supplied student allowances.

8.2.2.3 Law and Legal Authority

The law and legal system was not a great deterrent for the majority of participants and did not appear to lessen the amount of risky behaviour. Fear was a deterrent, as was the possibility of being caught in an illegal act. Most of the females, fifty-five, were aged sixteen and were not permitted legally to participate in any of the activities in the survey. Only a little more than one third of the total of ninety-one were old enough for sexual activity and were permitted to obtain a licence to drive a car. By contrast, only three could legally drink, yet the statistics on the negative risks, associated with alcohol use and abuse, indicated much higher participation rates.

8.2.2.4 Summary

The family, and particularly the parents, were the main controlling factors in the participants' lives. Their lack of fear of the legal aspects of their lives may have been the result of their limited knowledge and life experiences, or the belief that they were immune, still being students.

8.2.3 Research Objective 3: To ascertain the expectations placed on adolescent females by themselves, the family, their schools and the community in their earlier lives.

This question was the only one in the survey which was misinterpreted. Instead of commenting on their parents' advice and the females' expectations re marriage and having children in the future, the participants mainly disclosed the standards their parents had for the manner in which they should relate to their present family members. It would have been useful for the

participants to have had more guidelines about the problems associated with family life, to help them with planning their lives.

8.2.3.1 Family Expectations

Respect was high on the list of expectations, as was showing affection and care in a close family unit. They were encouraged to assist others in the family, to work together and to stay close to each other all their lives. They were also given advice about seeking happiness and having a good character. Only five participants were given advice as to whether to marry or have children. Over one third of the participants were not exposed to parental or family expectations of any kind.

8.2.3.2 Educational Expectations

Much of the educational advice concerned the actual standards deemed important, rather than proscribed educational pathways. University education was not emphasized for many (only five participants), yet two thirds indicated that they were heading for this pathway. To do one's best and to be exceptional were key objectives, as was achieving well overall.

8.2.3.3 Career Expectations

Career advice for over one third of the participants was non-existent. The remaining participants were given valuable advice about gaining stable careers which would endure into the future. The emphasis was on having ambition and aiming for success and choosing interesting careers, importantly ones they liked. High monetary aims were a consideration, but finding happiness was also important once again.

As a comparison, an analysis of the educational levels of the parents was completed. There were similarities between the mothers' and fathers' achievements with this aspect of their lives. The mothers had the greater number with professional, university training, but two fathers had achieved Masters' Degrees and only one mother had begun her Master's Degree. Another mother had obtained the lowest level of education at the Grade 6 (last class in Primary School) stage. Both female and male parents had similar numbers (fifteen each) achieving the Senior Secondary level of education, matching the stage the participants had just begun at the time of this survey. Mothers had a slight lead over the fathers when it came to Technical Training. Many factors may have assisted the participants to aim to higher levels of education than their parents, including more availability of courses and also funding, as well as concentrated education and career advice at earlier stages in the school systems.

8.2.3.4 Summary of Research Objective 3

Whilst academic and very detailed expectations about the participants' futures were not evident in the participants' lives, they had chosen very dedicated, academic career paths. The valuable expectations regarding care of family members would stand them in good stead in their future lives.

8.2.4 Research Objective 4: To ascertain the resilience adolescent girls have to adversity in their lives.

The participants had experienced a wide range of traumas in their lives. These ranged from parental cancer to attempted suicides and personal illness and depression.

8.2.4.1 Resilience and Trauma Support

Nearly one third had encountered situations, which needed resilience on their part. They had overcome these difficulties with the support of family and friends. Various techniques had been used such as engaging in writing activities, using a positive approach and a few through religious teachings. However, only a small group of participants had this religious support.

8.2.4.2 No Support

A lesser amount of 25 percent had had negative experiences with the traumas in their lives. They had had no support and no one to trust, leading to depression, suicide attempts and anorexia. The remaining group forming nearly a half of the number of the participants, had had no traumas or had not disclosed them.

8.2.4.3 Summary of Research Objective 4

It was gratifying to note that these participants were able to overcome tragedies and trauma in their lives and that most had a support network to sustain them.

8.2.5 Research Objective 5: To ascertain the need for adolescent females to “sensation seek” and their knowledge and perceptions of risk taking activities.

8.2.5.1 Reasons for Negative Risk Taking

“Sensation seeking” to experience fun and excitement was the major reason for choosing their risk taking activities. Over one third of the participants indicated this choice over the considerations of “right or wrong” and “legal or illegal”. Curiosity aroused their interest and produced the initial engagement in risky behaviours. Drinking also reduced the students’ inhibitions. For a smaller group, under 10 percent, there was the added thrill of the “adrenalin

rush” and the “buzz” involved. A similar sized group did admit to weighing up the positive and negative aspects of the risks involved. Only a very small group admitted that some activities were not worthwhile. The comments made by this small group indicated that some adolescents do monitor their actions and can resist negative risk taking.

8.2.5.2 Health Risks

It was very disappointing to discover that the participants did not consider the health risks involved in their “fun” activities. Small groups, of 12 and 7 percent, considered whether the risks would hurt others and the levels of safety involved, or whether there was a question of right or wrong. Some participants, representing 10 percent, valued themselves, wanted no regrets and did not want to have “numb consciences”.

8.2.5.3 Summary of Objective 5

These attitudes to risk taking were very disturbing and were hard to accept in light of all the other positive findings regarding their attitudes, personal descriptions and ambitions for the future. There appeared to be an incongruity about their “sensation seeking” and their future goals. Perhaps the age of instant gratification, more flexible parenting and lessening of religious commitment allows the young adolescent much more freedom and opportunity today for risk taking.

8.2.6 Research Objective 6: The Interview section indicated clearly that the strategies for assisting adolescents through the process from childhood to adulthood should be very diverse.

All educational professionals and parents encourage a wide range of approaches and activities to encourage adolescents to resist dangerous

lifestyles and to consider the types of people they wish to be and the types of future goals they wish to achieve. A sympathetic approach was needed when dealing with adolescents' problems and risky behaviour. Retelling experiences from the adults' own adolescent lifestyles, can be effective to give a sense of "reality" to their advice and counselling. The provision of resilience-based activities in the curriculum was one strategy, which would provide opportunities for the adolescents, to develop a sense of worth and motivation to succeed in their chosen pathways. Religious schools had the added support of Chaplains and faith based curricula to support their adolescent students.

8.2.7 Research Objective 7

The policy documents contained both general and specific advice needed for the education of adolescents regarding the four negative risk-taking activities discussed in this research. The Australian policies were very holistic and were generally concerned about the wellbeing and support for all students and gender differences. It was left to the States to develop very detailed instructions regarding the curricula content and sanctions regarding infringements relating to risk taking, particularly with regard to the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol. The States' ability to achieve the intentions of the Australian policies was definitely tied to funding from the Australian Government.

8.3 Discussion

In this discussion the research findings in the Literature Review will be linked to the relevant researchers and studies. There were few comments in the questionnaire responses about the participants being very aware that they were going through a process as expressed by Baurind (1987) and cited by Plant and Plant (1992) and Kroger (1996), but some of their attitudes reflected their

understanding that there were still controls on their lives, be it parental, school or community based. Their strong aspirations and goal levels and the belief that these could be achieved, were more orientated to an *outcomes* approach, as explained by Erikson (1988) and Marcia (1996) as well as gaining a sense of identity at the “I-ness” level, as outlined by Rice & Dolgin (2002). However, they did indicate that there were significant others in their families, schools and to a lesser extent the community, with whom they enjoyed companionship or from whom they gained inspiration for their lives. In most cases they were very motivated, had a very positive view of themselves, had accepted themselves and had realized some of their potential.

The definitions of adolescence from the historical perspectives portray a picture of doom and gloom for the whole process of adolescence. There was some minor evidence of “storm and stress”, as expressed very early last century by Hall (1904). The only instances of having difficulties with adolescence were revealed in their descriptions of how adolescents were treated by society and in the lists of traumas they had experienced. However, to their credit, they had been resilient enough to overcome these latter stresses as Bernard (1997) indicated. There was evidence of a generation gap in their attitudes about the controls and expectations placed upon them and the comments made about the way a teenager was treated in society as a “marginal person”, as Lewin (1948) contended in the research recorded by Bosma and Jackson (1990). However, this was countered by the positive accounts of the changing, more relaxed and more trusting relationships developing with their parents. Higbee’s (1997) research indicated that it is wrong to believe that the “generation gap “ between adolescents and parents prevents any guidance regarding risk taking.

There was no mention by the participants that they saw adolescence as purely a male phenomenon as did Bloustein (2003), and furthermore as a remnant of the Industrial Revolution and the child labour restrictions, legally made at that time, according to Lesko (2001). Nor did they comment on the fact that they wanted equality with the males and their life styles, including their proclivity for risk taking. These participants did not demonstrate that they were being determined by their biology and the hormonal changes of adolescence. Quite the contrary was evident in the females' rejection, in most instances, of having children or just waiting for marriage. Only 11 percent mentioned marriage and children, 2 percent marriage alone and another 11 percent who mentioned having children, but with no mention of having made formal marriage partnerships. Only one participant referred to finding a partner and another mentioned the adoption of African children as her goal. The patterns emerging in their risk taking and general attitude to life would indicate that they wanted a freer life, without the bounds of motherhood and traditional family ties, replacing these with aspirations of travel, careers, gaining possessions and attending University. They were also in the pursuit of happiness, sporting development, finding security through work and obtaining a good job, setting up businesses and relocating. Their views certainly supported the socio-historical view that emphasizes that economic and educational opportunities of their time, construct the thinking of young people in distinctive ways. Their goals and aspirations (demanding both economic and educational means) and their belief in the achievement of these, reflected this view. The gender roles of the present time, regarding their choices of vocation, career, and personal achievement, were reflected in the participants' views. They accepted the viewpoints expounded by Rice and Dolgin (2002) where recognition is given to the changed roles of women to their gender roles.

There were no references by the participants to a “panoptical time” occurring during adolescence, but their aims could be gauged as being *outcomes* based and therefore similar, except for the reference to this “panoptical time” having a moratorium of responsibility placed upon it. The participants’ responses to the level of responsibility in their lives was almost totally in favour of being fully responsible for all that happened to them. Only a small number contended that other people’s interactions with them could cause a lapse in responsibility and that not all of life’s events were the results of adolescents’ actions.

Most of the participants had already developed a strong sense of identity and there were no major indications that they were wrestling with “Who am I?” They could be seen to be in a heightened “phase of self awareness”, but this did not prevent them from engaging in risky behaviours. They did see themselves in the majority of cases as “misunderstood” by the adults in their communities, but they were very engaged in the “acquisition of new social and cognitive skills” from research by Albright (1994) as cited by Bosma and Jackson (1990). They were quite adamant that their peer group was not influential in any negative way, nor that they were being treated differently to boys. According to other research, both self-esteem and group relatedness are related for both girls and boys (Heaven et al., 2005). More of the participants had brothers than sisters, so the male influence was strong in their lives. They did not mention the role of the media and teenage magazines in their lives or that these were impinging on them and influencing them to lead stereotypical, female lives.

The participants indicated that they were responding better to the locus of control around them, particularly their parents. They were still annoyed by the controls of their schools and some community organizations e.g. Centrelink,

which controlled their social security study payments, but their attitudes to the law and legal system were not fearful enough and the promise of “fun and excitement” still lead them into risk taking behaviours. Those who were religious or interested in attendance at churches did not show any greater evidence about being hesitant regarding the engagement in risk taking activities. The participants’ personalities did not match all the traits which are precursors to risk taking, such as impulsiveness, extraversion, or psychoticism. There was a group of religious participants, but generally the whole group had achievement motivation, some of which showed their adventurous nature with aspirations of travel and opening businesses.

The participants did not acknowledge a “rite of passage” in their adolescent experiences, but this was implied by the fact that their goals were unrealized and that they were on a journey to finish their education and to gain their goals in the future. They recognized that there were controlling influences in their lives from their parents, schools and community institutions and that they were not entirely at an autonomous stage in their lives. They had found out “who they were” and the main context, which had developed this, was the family one and to a lesser extent the school where the Primary experiences had been more enjoyable. The Secondary experiences were more challenging because of the increased workload. There was evidence that they had had little social capital, with not much interaction with their communities. They were definitely resilient after many traumas and with the support of friends and family. Friends were only mentioned as an integral part of their resilience in this context and were negated in the context of the negative influence of peer pressure on their lives. The participants’ responses to the questions in the questionnaire certainly demonstrated their ability to reflect about themselves and their attitudes to their lives.

“What is the level of negative risk taking amongst female students in a senior secondary school environment?” This was the overarching question for this study. The participants were engaged in risky activities, but were not very aware of the dangers of their risk taking activities. They appeared to be following the male trends where the risk taking is usually higher in alcohol and drug taking, as it was for these participants. There was no evidence that the females were using tranquilizers at a lesser or greater rate. Verbal evidence from teenage girls indicates that most of their drinking would be done outside the home. There was no indication as to whether the alcohol was distilled spirits or beer, as indicated in the literature review, or whether other alcoholic beverages had taken precedence.

Binge Drinking was considered to be moderately dangerous with a rating of four, but was the most prevalent risky activity with Drinking Alcohol second, with a lower level of danger at a rating of two. Smoking Hash, Unprotected Sex with no Condom and No Contraceptive Pill were all considered to be very dangerous at a rating of seven and yet were the next most frequent activities. These risks follow the trends for Australia and America as outlined in the literature. When regular participation is considered, Drinking Alcohol and Binge Drinking are still the main activities, whilst sexual activity is more prevalent than drug taking.

Whilst there was evidence of participation in risky activities, the participants were mainly members of family groups and did not fit into patterns of being in “sub-cultures” with alternative life-styles. Their high motivational levels and very worthwhile aspirations and goals were not affected at the stage of the questionnaire study, by their risk taking. What the future pattern of their risky behaviour would become, could not be ascertained, nor could its impact be

known, but if their risky behaviours continued and increased, health problems could occur.

The participants indicated that “fun and excitement” were the key elements, which lead them to participate in the risky behaviours, and they were not conscious of a “possibility of loss” (Yates, 1992) in their lives. There was evidence of the young participants wanting to “live on the edge” but there were no references to the fact that alcohol played a great role in helping them deal with stressful lives, but this could be inferred from their need to participate in binge drinking and other alcohol related activities. There was no mention of which type of alcohol was the most preferred, but anecdotal evidence from teenagers tends to favour the mixed drinks, often advertised as variations of “soft drinks” but actually with high alcoholic contents. Their reasons for the participants’ risky behaviour was more attuned to being hedonistic about their lives and wanting to pursue activities which gave them enjoyment and pleasure. They did not appear to be young women unable to be guided by adults and in fact they spoke very highly of their mothers’ guidance and inspiration and the positive effect of significant others.

They were conscious, in many cases, of the Senior Secondary College being more burdensome for them as there were more difficult curricula, more tension and more pressure to perform better. The actual subjects were harder, with much more to do with workloads almost doubling, therefore causing stress. Some teachers did not push them to do the work, so the emphasis was for them to discipline themselves. Career orientation was also emphasized too strongly and decisions were constantly being sought, about their work after leaving school. Therefore, life at the Senior Secondary College was more serious; there were more expectations and not a great enough variety of

subjects to study. One student commented that the change had been so dramatic that she had actually felt stupid for the first time in her life.

The problem of “over-socialization” of girls in general did not seem to affect the participants in this study. Most were determined to achieve their goals, to study hard and to achieve work in their chosen fields. There were very few references to being lower in self-image or to be overly concerned with their appearance or to be seeking popularity. They did not agree with Bloustein’s (2003) claims that females have incongruent sets of expectations set upon them, except for the pressure to decide upon careers and work goals. Additionally, the participants did not complain that they were being treated in a lesser way to boys. Risk taking was evident, but eating disorders or body changes did not rate as major causes of concern. Unfortunately, there were no comments about the health risks involved with their risk taking and only one student commented that risky behaviours could cause death. The only risk prevention available to these participants would have been the Designated Driver arrangement, where one adolescent from a group abstained from alcohol to be sober when he/she drove the friends to their homes.

The contexts in which these students were growing up revolved mainly with the family and the school with little social capital obtained from the wider community. This is in definite contrast to Putman’s (1998) contention that social capital greatly affects the quality of one’s life. They were under the control of parents and other adults in the school and in society and reacted to the expectations placed upon them by their schools. They had greater rapport with their mothers and many were critical of the attitudes of their fathers towards them. Advice to the participants had come from the mothers about “being a girl” and for their careers, parents only gave very general expectations. They would concur with Youness and Smollar’s (1985)

research, as cited in Bosma and Jackson (1990), which indicated that adolescents still return to parents for advice at critical times in their lives. The school system had a very sequential program to provide work experience and career advice, but as quoted before, some participants had become stressed by all the emphasis on this and the options available.

The type of positive language used by two thirds of the participants reflected some of the words which had appeared in the literature review. These included such adjectives as *“happy” “open”, and “loving”*, but extended that list for parents with words such as *“trust”, “respect” “support”, being “very close”, “caring deeply”, having a “great connection” and being able “to talk about anything”*. The negative comments were few but included parents having *“no respect”* for their child, preventing a *“warm, close family”, not “understanding”* their child, fathers’ *“relationships being very strained”, and “being very nervous around”* a child. The participant who indicated the sexual abuse explained that *“Mum won’t listen to me”* and that her Dad *“wanted nothing to do with her”*. All the students in the Senior Secondary College had access to Counsellors and counselling with any problem they may have had and the latter student did present for assistance after the questionnaire stage had been completed.

When the findings from this survey were compared with the findings from the former Abbott-Chapman/Denholm (1999) survey, there were many similarities and differences. The negative risk taking activities were the same with alcohol abuse, extreme drunkenness (binge drinking), smoking marijuana and unsafe sex, with dangerous driving being a less common practice. They made no reference to these activities being considered *“adult” or “social”*, but more that they were only for *“fun and excitement”*.

The adolescents in this survey did not appear to distance themselves from these activities, being very open to responding to them, but they were very unaware of the real dangers inherent in their risky behaviours. There was much less engagement in the more dangerous activities such as sharing needles, and use of the “hard drugs” such as cocaine and heroin. They felt as if they were under the surveillance of parents and adults, but made no references to their depiction in the media as mentioned in the Abbott-Chapman/Denholm (2000) article. Their relationships with parents were changing and there was more trust and freedom appearing within their families.

The participants overrode any law and legal ramifications or parents’ teaching of right or wrong, when their opportunities for risk taking arose. They did mention positive risks, as in attempting a college course of study, and were aware that many necessary activities were risky with everything in life involving some type of risk. Life would have been too boring without taking risks, but future goals and aspirations were also very important to these students, as in the Abbott-Chapman/Denholm (2000) study. Very few participants mentioned having no future plans. Religion was not important to two thirds of the survey group and was not mentioned as a deterrent to risky behaviour, while moral judgements were more related to not hurting others with their risk taking. A large 60 percent of the participants were aged sixteen, so this age group was well represented in the activities studied. Speeding was not high on the list of risk taking behaviours. Only fourteen, or fifteen had tried it once and about 8 percent, participated occasionally.

Only a little over a quarter of them had watched X Rated videos which were not considered to be dangerous at all. Not many of them had the benefit of belonging to community groups, other than sporting clubs or musical groups.

There exists, at this present time, many opportunities for more health topics being included in school curricula to assist adolescents to change through self-monitoring and by having a knowledge base, rather than through fear or prohibition. An intergenerational change has occurred with this last point.

8.4 Statistical Findings

The Crosstabulations provided statistical evidence mostly for Objectives 1 and 2. There are strong relationships between a sense of self, parental control and religious influence and the curbing of negative risk taking activities. Religious affiliations appeared to be mentioned less often than expected.

The specific T Tests highlighted results for Objectives 2 and 3 the effect of parent control and influence, but also added the level of the Mothers' Education and the Expectations for Education placed on the participants as influencing factors. Trauma frequency and positive reactions to trauma were also relevant as influences, for Objective 4, against negative risky behaviours. In contrast the group T Tests highlighted personal factors such as aspirations and positive self-descriptions, along with parental influence and expectation and the contribution of significant others in the family and community. Church attendance was the only religious factor.

The ANOVA Tests again supported Objectives 1 and 2 with the positive effect of past interests and present club involvement, school enjoyment, educational goals and expectations and family control. Most of the statistical factors focussed on personal and family influences, but there was a small range of factors external to these as well.

8.5 Further Research

As the project drew to a close, it was clear that many new developments in Australian society and internationally had created new dimensions about the

topic of adolescence and negative risk taking. One of the most disturbing aspects had been the increasing use of the new drug called ICE (Crystal Methamphetamine Hydrochloride) (Fulde & Wodak, 2007; Kearney, 2006; Totaro, 2005). This drug has devastating effects as it alters mood, releases an abundance of dopamine and becomes increasingly addictive, more so than heroin and ten times as much as cocaine. This has become the new “party drug” and needs committed research in relationship to adolescence. Another insidious danger for young females and males alike is the increased use of the Internet with the associated dangers associated with Chat Rooms and Paedophilia (Australian Crime Commission, 2006; Crime, Misconduct Commission, 2007; Smith, 2007). A very recent report by Tucci, Mitchell and Goddard (2008) from the Australian Childhood Foundation and Child Abuse Research Australia group at Monash University, outlined the significant safety concerns faced by young Australian children aged between 10-14 years. Some of their concerns covered being hurt by an adult (28 percent), becoming a victim of crime (27 percent), and not being protected from abuse (19 percent). However, pertinent information for this topic is that 48 percent of children reported that they had been exposed to material on the Internet, which concerned them, while 27 percent were still worried about the dangers they face over the Internet (Tucci, Mitchell & Goddard, 2008, Abstract).

The situation for Australian males in many contexts was raised many times during the time of this research about females and adolescence. It may be a male dominated society in Australia, but the literature available, records a wide diversity of problems for males such as eating disorders (Eliot & Baker, 2002), masculinity (Smith, Guthrie & Oakley, 2000) and puberty, mental health and depression (McGrath, 2002).

Another problem which has occurred because of Australia's humanitarian approach to migration for ethnic groups from overseas war-torn countries, is that of the males, especially the Sudanese, brought up in cultures where family and social customs elevate the masculine status, to the detriment of the females. This will have repercussions for the male adolescents as they are integrated into Australian schools and society (Soon, 2008; Maiden, 2007; Waterhouse, 2001). For both females and males there is also an opportunity for research into the positivity of adolescence. This study demonstrated that adolescence could be a stimulating experience, filled with goals and aspirations and with satisfying relationships with parents, teachers and adults.

8.6 Summary

The theory began with the premise that adults in society do not accept adolescents and this group of participants agreed that they were misunderstood. They urged adults to realize that they were knowledgeable and not a peripheral group and they still continued to live very motivated lives with very definite goals and confidence about success with self-image and a "sense of identity". There was only marginal interest in the traditional roles of finding husbands or partners and having families.

Conflict was evident in the authority levels of some of the parental-child relationships, but these relationships had changed in very positive ways, with their maturity. Mothers were the most influential parent whilst fathers were not always viewed in the most favourable way. The legal system and its laws did not curb their participation in their negative risk taking activities, but some fear did deter them. Religion was noted in the theory as being relevant in inhibiting behaviour, but with only one third involved, it was only a deterrent for some of the participants. There was no evidence in the survey that this particular group of females had any of the personality types, which were

associated with risk taking, such as aggression. However, the vocabulary they used to describe their parents and their relationships with them were very similar to the lists from the former studies. Their resilience levels at 55 percent also were comparable with those quoted in the literature, the norm being 50 to 70 percent.

The risk taking aspects of the participants' lives disclosed the need for fun and excitement and more freedom. X-Rated videos were not considered dangerous at all, with nearly 50 percent having no engagement in the activity at all and with only three students being regular viewers. The participants did reveal the pressures they were experiencing with the more difficult Secondary School curricula and the need to determine career and work choices. They were given only limited advice by their parents, and significant others, about their futures, but in spite of this they had been very engaged with their education. There were no allusions to the fact that their risky behavior could affect these ambitions. Social capital for these students was very limited because of their busy school life and part-time work, coupled with much travelling for some of the participants.

The final results from this study emphasised the need for both parents to be involved with their daughters, particularly fathers and for the development of more strategies to curb the risk taking behaviour. These will include political action to regulate the availability of alcohol and drugs, more educational programmes within schools, more religious/ethics type life style courses and parent, teacher and social awareness.

The findings from the whole study signify that, although these females have not adopted, in the main, religious beliefs to guide them, they have developed a morality of their own, taken from their own sense of self and of self-worth.

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Appendices

ADOLESCENCE, SENSE OF IDENTITY AND RISK TAKING QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is anonymous. Please do not write your name on it. No-one in the college apart from the researcher will see this form. When you have filled it in please put it in the pre-paid envelope provided and return it to me by October 31st, 2001. (Answer in boxes where applicable. If you need extra space in some sections, please write on the back of the page or add extra sheets of paper.)

PART A Personal Data

1. **How old are you?**
- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 16 | |
| 17-19 | |

2. **Locality**
- | | |
|------------|--|
| a) Town | |
| b) Country | |

3. **In what type of family did you grow up?**

Two Parents Others

a) No of parents?		
b) No of sisters?		
c) No of brothers?		
d) Your birth order?		N/A

4. **What were the highest educational levels reached by your parents?**

- a) Mother
- | | | | |
|------------|----------|-------------|----------------|
| University | Training | To Grade 10 | Below Grade 10 |
|------------|----------|-------------|----------------|

--	--	--	--

- b) Father
- | | | | |
|------------|----------|-------------|----------------|
| University | Training | To Grade 10 | Below Grade 10 |
|------------|----------|-------------|----------------|

--	--	--	--

5. How far do you want to go with your education/training?

Not complete Year 12.....

Complete Year 12.....

TAFE/Apprenticeship.....

University.....

Other Tertiary Educ./Training.....

Why?

.....

.....

.....

6. Clubs and Societies**Present Past**

Sports club or team

Music (Include choir/band etc.)

Hobby or Interest Group

Church Group

Community Group

Community Service Group

Education/training Group

Other

7. How important are these for you?

Not very important

Not important

Neutral

Important

Very Important

8. Do you have any religious beliefs?

Yes

Not sure

No

Used to

**9. Do you ever attend church or other worship services?
(Either Christian or Non Christian)**

Often

Sometimes

Hardly ever

Never

PART B This section is about your early childhood (before you were 12 years old).

10 a) Was your early childhood basically happy?

☐

Yes

☐

No

b) Why did you answer as you did?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. Which parent had the most influence on you as a child?

Mother

Father

In what ways did this parent influence you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Which parent had the most authority over you as a child?

Mother

Father

a) In which ways was this shown?

.....

.....

.....

.....

b) How did this influence your relationship with this parent?

.....

.....

.....

13. What expectations (if any) did your parents have for you during your childhood? If they had none, please say 'none'.

a) Education

.....

b) Career

.....

c) Family

.....

14. a. Did you enjoy school as a young child?

Yes

No

Explain why you have answered as you have.

.....

.....

.....

b. Do you enjoy College as much as you did school then?

Less

☐

Some

☐

More

☐

Explain why you have answered as you have?

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. What influence did your peer group have on you in your childhood?

.....

.....

.....

**16. Were there other significant people who influenced you in your childhood?
In what ways?**

a) Relatives?

.....

.....

b) Teachers?

.....

.....

c) Community members?

.....

.....

**17. What expectations for your future if any, did you have in your childhood?
If you had none please say 'none'.**

a) Education

.....

b) Career

.....

b) Family

.....

Please tell me about how you see yourself

18. How would you describe yourself as a person?

.....

.....

.....

19. What are your goals for your future life at this time?

.....

.....

.....

20. Do you think you will achieve these goals? Why do you think this?

.....

.....

.....

21. What is your relationship with your parents at this time?

.....

.....

.....

22. How has this changed since your childhood?

.....

.....

.....

23. How much authority do your parents have over what you do?

.....

.....

.....

24. How do you react to the degree of parental authority you describe?

.....

.....

.....

25. What other controls or restrictions do you experience at this time?

.....

.....

.....

26. How are you reacting to these?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

27. Have you had any major traumas in your life?
e.g. broken relationships, serious injury or illness of yourself or a family member, death, separation, divorce.

Much ☐ **Some** ☐ **None** ☐

If you have, how have you coped?

.....

.....

.....

.....

PART D Risk Perception and Participation

This section is about your attitude to taking risks

28. How much is risk taking a part of your life?

.....

.....

.....

What are the most positive risks you have taken, and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

What are the most negative risks you have taken, and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 29 a. **When deciding whether to do something risky or dangerous do you think about whether it is right or wrong? Please explain why.**

.....

.....

.....

.....

- b. **When deciding whether to do something risky or dangerous do you think about whether it is legal or illegal? Please explain why.**

.....

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- c. **When deciding whether to do something risky or dangerous do you think about whether it is fun and exciting? Please explain why.**

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30. **To what extent do you feel responsible for what happens to you in life?**

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31. **Is there anything else you would like to tell me about being a teenager today, and the way teenagers are treated in our society? If so please write below.**

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32. How risky or dangerous do you consider the following risk taking activities? (The list is in alphabetical order). Tick the box which applied to the risk on a scale of 1-7).

1 Not Risky-----Very Risky 7
Don't Know 8

A Binge Drinking/Getting drunk	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
B Drinking alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
C Drink Driving	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
D Injecting Heroin	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
E Sex without a condom	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
F Sex without self being on the pill	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
G Sex with someone you did not know very well	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
H Sharing needles	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
I Smoking marijuana/hash	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
J Sniffing glue or solvents	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
K Snorting cocaine	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
L Speeding in a car	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
M Taking speed and cocaine	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
N Watching X or R Rated videos/movies	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8

33. Have you ever done any of the following? If so say whether once, occasionally or regularly? (Remember this is totally anonymous - I do not want to know who you are.)

1 = No Never, 2 = Yes Once, 3 = Yes Occas'ly, 4 = Yes Regularly

A	Got blind drunk	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
B	Drunk alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
C	Driven while drunk	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
D	Injected heroin	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
E	Had sex without a condom	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
F	Had sex without your being on the pill	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
G	Had sex with someone you did not know very well	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
H	Shared needles	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
I	Smoked marijuana/hash	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
J	Sniffed glue or solvents	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
K	Snorted cocaine	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
L	Driven dangerously	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
M	Taken speed/ecstasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
N	Watched X or R rated movies/videos	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4

Thank You For Your Time and Interest